

# THE CONCEPT OF THE OUTLOOK TOWER IN THE WORK OF PATRICK GEDDES

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of Patrick Geddes

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## **Abstract**

As an academic, a scholar and a thinker Patrick Geddes worked in a wide and diverse range of intellectual fields. He was active in biology and botany, geography, sociology, what came to be called town planning, history and the theory and practice of the social sciences. As a man of practical affairs and action he was a patron of art and architecture, rescuer of the Old Town in Edinburgh, founder and funder of the Edinburgh Summer School and a College in Montpellier. As well as Edinburgh he was active in London, Paris, Dublin, America, India, Jerusalem and Montpellier.

This protean diversity has called for the two responses from interpreters of his work. The first was to stress the town planning component at the expense of the rest. He has been monopolised by the town planners chiefly through the influence of Lewis Mumford and to a lesser extent Patrick Abercrombie and Frank Mears. The second was to explain his polymathic diversity as the work of an extraordinary personality: such studies have been biographical with a tendency to flattery.

This thesis seeks to understand Patrick Geddes as part of the cultural and intellectual life of Scotland. The origins of his town planning work is examined as part of

the particular traditions and history of Edinburgh just as his regional planning analyses are seen as part of the tradition of resistance to the cultural domination of London, the imperial metropolis. The role of the Outlook Tower is interpreted as a component of his general theory of pedagogy especially as his concept of the museum relates to this theory. The analyses of his attempt to create a Scottish Renaissance help explain the weakness of his more general sociological and ecological theories.

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## Introduction

Since his death in 1932 Patrick Geddes has been principally claimed by the town planners. The formal incorporation of town planning as an instrument of the state, most comprehensively at the initiative of the Labour Government after the Second World War, has seen the retrospective construction of pedigrees reading back town planning to the precursors and pioneers of its ultimate success. Patrick Geddes has been claimed as one of the early prophets and founding fathers.

Simultaneously with the emergence of town planning as a function of state policy was the institutionalisation of town planning as a profession on the British model. It is self-evident that much if not the largest part of P.G.'s life's work was extrinsic to the post-World War II professional ideology of British town planning. These ideas and activities of P.G. have been explained away as the marginalia of an irrepressible genius, or, at least, a most energetic polymath, who had many groping experiments, false starts, wrong turnings and dead ends before he found the high road that within a

generation was to lead the triumph of town planning. Town planning ideology has been a classical Whig interpretation of its own history which it has seen as inevitable unfolding of progress, fundamentally unquestioned until the Thatcher government.

The polymath explanation of P.G. as a wayward genius, striking out in many directions until he found the way of truth and helped establish the foundations of modern British town planning has only been able to integrate P.G.'s non-town planning thought and action with official ideology by one methodological device - the biography. All major studies of Geddes have been the evolution of a personality.

The biographical approach has been a dead hand on Geddes studies. It has been a tendency to uncritical hagiography and hero worship and has unhelpfully taken Geddes at face value. In fact this has been counter productive to Geddes' esteem: he is more interesting than mere tired assertion has led us to believe. In Geddesian studies and the literature on him we must follow D.H. Lawrence's precept on the novel: don't trust the writer trust the tale.



Of course the polymath claim has a basis in fact. P.G. was a founder of British town planning, a founder of the Sociological Society and a major influence on the development of British geography. Yet much of his simultaneous presence in these different professional fields can be accounted for by his rare genius in drawing to him an amanuensis and faithful acolyte in each one of the particular professions. Arthur Thomson, holder of the Chair of Natural History at the University of Aberdeen, was Geddes' life-long collaborator in biology. V.V. Branford founded the Sociological Society with Geddes, was its first Secretary and provided much of its cash, and worked closely with Geddes from his years as a student at Edinburgh until his death two years before Geddes. A.J. Herbertson, a student and research assistant of Geddes, was one of the most influential forces in British Geography as head of the department at the University of Oxford after Halford Mackinder. Frank Mears in Edinburgh and Lewis Mumford in New York were the developers and continuators of Geddes' town planning work.

Much of being a follower of Geddes meant being a true believer. It is not surprising that many sons of the manse who were unable to maintain their faith sheltered under his wing. Such were Arthur Thomson and Alexander Farquharson, who took over the Sociological Society from Victor Branford. Others

were young men in search of some morally binding address. T.R.R. Marr who went on to become warden to the University Settlement in Manchester; Edward McGegan who left Edinburgh for the Guild of St. George in Birmingham and Cecil Reddie who founded Abbotsholme School, come to mind immediately, but the discipleship nurtured at Geddes' University Hall on Castlehill could be multiplied many times. In a Weberian sense Geddes was a charismatic leader. His was a prophetic authority, despite his grounding in nineteenth century positivism. His argumentation was that of asserting the true word: its cultural purpose of incorporating its hearers into the community of true believers. Lewis Mumford initiates his correspondence with Geddes as his 'Dear Master'. He found himself 'almost unmanned' in being grabbed by the shoulders as being the very image of 'my own dear laddie', Alisdair, who was killed in the First World War. In a short play he wrote in the 1920's was put into the mouth of Geddes' housekeeper the telling Presbyterian invocation that coming to Geddes should be as a Catholic comes to grief: with open arms and an open heart. It was not till 1966 in Encounter Magazine that Mumford was to give voice to his 'Disciple's Rebellion', relating how incompatible he found the demands of true belief enforced in any collaborative relationship with Geddes.

As the most convenient collaborators Geddes roped all his family into his penurious barque for any adventure that took his fancy on the cultural high seas. There is a revealing feminist history to be written of the role Geddes' wife Anna played in her husband's life-work. No matter how many times P.G. burned his bridges, J. Arthur Thomson was to write to the Geddes' children after her death, she was always at his side steadfastly loyal and undaunted. Of the frustration of working with Geddes it has been suggested that his son-in-law, the architect and town planner, Frank Mears' long professional collaboration can only be explained by his legendary taciturnity. In a conversation with Mears it was said, the interlocutor was virtually engaged in a monologue! His son Alisdair could barely restrain the tears of frustration when, having just completed the hanging of his father's Civics Exhibition at Ghent in 1913 according to the original plan, his father bounced off the train with a new idea for complete rehanging of the exhibition the night before the opening. Perhaps the moral, however, is to the advantage of Geddes pere : the exhibition won the gold medal.

Geddes the polymath certainly then, given the qualification of his charming and inveighling a whole congress of followers, collaborators and amanuenses as intellectual plenipotentiaries. We may say of

endeavours are as the form of correct address to the poet, Grieve or MacDiarmid, in Norman McCaig's elucidation: in a dialogue with Chris you talk with a whole committee. It is in the nature of the Geddes' circle, the social context of his work, the historical genesis of his ideas, that this dissertation sets its face against the biographical orthodoxy. Among the diversity of his many activities and ideas a unity is sought not as the history of a personality, but as a Scot at a particular time and place. The increasing anguish in Geddes' time of Scottish cultural identity, the role of the Scottish University and intellectuals in this and the changing circumstances of the emerging modern state and city provide the context within which Geddes' ideas are to be interpreted and explained. A department of Scottish History and the University of St. Andrews are fit and proper starting points.

## Chapter 1

### Patrick Geddes in Edinburgh

In 1886 Patrick Geddes moved with his newly married wife and his housekeeper to an apartment at 6 James Court, a tenement in a close off the High Street of Old Edinburgh. The journey as the crow flies from Geddes' bachelor rooms at 81a Princes Street to his new apartment high on the ridge of the Old Town was a mere three or four hundred yards. An enormous social gap belied the geographical distance. From the "draughty parallelograms" (Robert Louis Stevenson) of Craig's New Town to the crowded tenements of the Old Town perched on "the saw-backed graph of a fever chart" (Hugh MacDiarmid) the gulf between the better-off and worse-off classes was all the more dramatic in contrast since the intimate juxtaposition of architectural and social differences was viewed without interruption across the open panorama of the valley of the Princes Street Gardens. It was a zany contradiction that appealed to Stevenson:-

'From their smoky beehives, ten storeys high, the unwashed look down upon the open squares and gardens of the wealthy; and gay people sunning themselves along Princes Street, with its mile of commercial palaces all beflagged upon some great occasion, see, across a gardened valley set with statues, where the washings of the old town flutter in the breeze at its high windows'. (1)

What Stevenson was happy to observe, Geddes was passionate to reform. Frank Deas, one of the friends in the small reformist circles Geddes frequented, gives evidence of Geddes' idealistic pursuit of the co-operation between social classes which he sought by moving to James Court.

'Here is what you want to do as I understand it...'

Deas wrote (2) back to Geddes in response to the latter's request for advice:-

'...you want to rent 3 or 4 flats pretty high up in the houses on the East of the Free Church College. You want to live there yourself and expect to get some other people ... to do the same and bring their friends ...

In a little while you hope to have working people - families - and generally anyone who will come and so occupy the whole quadrangle and be a regular community.

Now all of it is quite a natural outcome of your enthusiasm and kindness of heart. An organised community! The "organisation" appeals to your head and your force, the "community", to your instincts of brotherhood'.

Geddes was not to heed his friend's advice and Deas accurately prophesied how Geddes' lifelong passionate impulse to practical action would shackle his intellectual endeavours:-

'...you will be the victim of deprivations on your time which are worse than pocket pickings - whose room will be full of men when he does not want them? - yours. Whose brain will be stimulated on all likely and unlikely subjects till quiet work is impossible? - yours. Whose biology and sociology will go to the devil? - yours.

...I am as earnest as can be in wishing you for two or three years at least to give up practical organisation whether castle-building in the air or on the Mound. If you must be "high-upper" than you are by all means take a flat on the 15th storey (sic) of the highest house in town on the Mound or elsewhere; in \*Short's Observatory if you like, or the castle if they will let you in but do leave resident seminars alone ...'

### **University Settlements**

Organising a community of working men around a quadrangle with middle class reformers locates an obvious pedigree for Geddes' ideas in the Toynbee Hall settlement of Canon Barnett in the East End of London. (3)

\*An unconsciously accurate prophecy of Deas this time, for Geddes purchased Short's Observatory in 1892 to make his famous Outlook Tower.



Founded 18 months before Geddes' arrival at James Court, Toynbee Hall was organised on the model of an Oxford College 'centrally poised between two worlds' of the crowded tenements of Whitechapel and the 'prosperous new suburbs of Hackney and Islington:-

'It was to bridge the gulf between the two worlds that the founders of Toynbee Hall thought of establishing a settlement, as a place where professional men could live among the poor - not as missionaries but as neighbours and friends'. (4)

However we must be careful not to conflate the two, for there was much that was idiosyncratic in Geddes' social settlement both in its development and origins.

There was an undoubtedly influential prototype nearer to hand that paralleled or even pre-dated the founding of Toynbee Hall. Well Court was a model development of working class housing built in the Dean Village in Edinburgh by John Ritchie Findlay\* the proprietor of

\*I can find no evidence of Geddes having personal connections with Findlay, although Findlay has the perfect profile of an ideal Geddes patron, a social relationship Geddes assiduously cultivated. Born in Arbroath in 1824 and long resident in Edinburgh's New Town, many of Findlay's public interests were near to Geddes' heart: his social service as a director of the Sick Children's Hospital and the Society for Improving the Conditions of the Poor; his services to Art as a Board Member of the School of Art, the School of Applied Art and the National Gallery; and supremely his service to museums, as exemplified in his generous gift of £62,000 to build a new National Portrait Gallery and Museum for the Society of Antiquaries. It is probable that his patronage was well past its peak when Geddes became active in Edinburgh. Findlay died in 1898.

Source: The Scotsman, October 17th, 1898.

The Scotsman and completed in October 1884. Designed around a courtyard with a gatehouse entrance and a picturesque clock tower containing a house and office for the resident factor on the ground floor and a community reading and recreation room on the upper floor, Well Court was a perfect example (still completely unscathed) of the collegiate housing model. It was of sufficient novelty for Findlay to be called to give evidence before the Royal Commissioners who reported in 1885 on the housing of the working classes in that great monument of Victorian social investigation.

Built for 'the superior class of workmen', not for social fraternising with the professional middle classes Findlay could detail for the Commissioners the exemplary standards of its space and sanitary facilities:-

'The accommodation varies; the houses are of various sizes; some have a living room with two bedrooms, others a living room with a single bedroom, and so on; the larger houses have separate sculleries with washtubs and sink, the smaller ones have sinks only; every house has a separate water closet; they are painted, papered; fitted with grates, gas fittings, and the drains

and sanitary arrangements are of the most complete description; they have been inspected and approved by the engineer and inspector of the Sanitary Association'. (5)

Whatever acquaintanceship Geddes had with Findlay there can be no doubt about the continuity in style and the pervading influence in design and conception of Well Court on Ramsay Garden, Geddes' greatest architectural achievement in Edinburgh. Although the steep slope of the site and the restrictions of plot ownership constrained the development of a fully enclosed courtyard at Ramsay Garden, Geddes did intend to build a towered gatehouse across the Ramsay Lane but it was never realised. (6) A final and compelling indication of the influence the Well Court model had on Geddes is evidenced by the fact that it was to Findlay's architect, Sydney Mitchell, that Geddes turned to design some two-thirds of the Ramsay Garden complex and many of Geddes' improvements in the Lawnmarket.

The ultimate source of the Toynbee Hall idea is directly traceable to the work of John Ruskin, albeit through the intermediary influence of Octavia Hill. Geddes' settlement in the Old Town derived its immediate stimulus from Octavia Hill but he drew his inspiration more directly from the great Victorian prophet, with whom he had personal contact.

Ruskin provided the intellectual basis for Geddes' critique of the economic orthodoxy of the day, which Geddes developed in three essays written between 1880 and 1885:-

The Classification of Statistics;

An Outline of the Principles of Economics; and

John Ruskin : Economist

In a letter to Ruskin in October 1882 Geddes refers to the Classification of Statistics he sent him the year previously:-

'...which contained, so far as it went, economic propositions coinciding with those held by you, and contradicting those of the orthodox school'.

He went on:-

'I hope soon to publish the main paper - An Outline of the Principles of Economics, in which the subject will be treated in a fuller and more comprehensive way...'

and finally mentioned what was to become the Ruskin essay:-

'I am also well on with an exposition - defensive and offensive of yours'. (7)

Figure 1: Entrance to James Court.

Source: Royal Commission on the Ancient &  
Historical Monuments of Scotland.

Figure 2: Entrance to Riddles Court.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 3: Toynbee Hall.

Source: Toynbee Hall Library.

Figure 4: Well Court, Dean Village.

Source: Author.

Figure 5: Well Court, Dean Village.

Source: Author.

Figure 6: Goose Pie House, Ramsay Garden.

Source: Alan Johnson.



Figure 1:



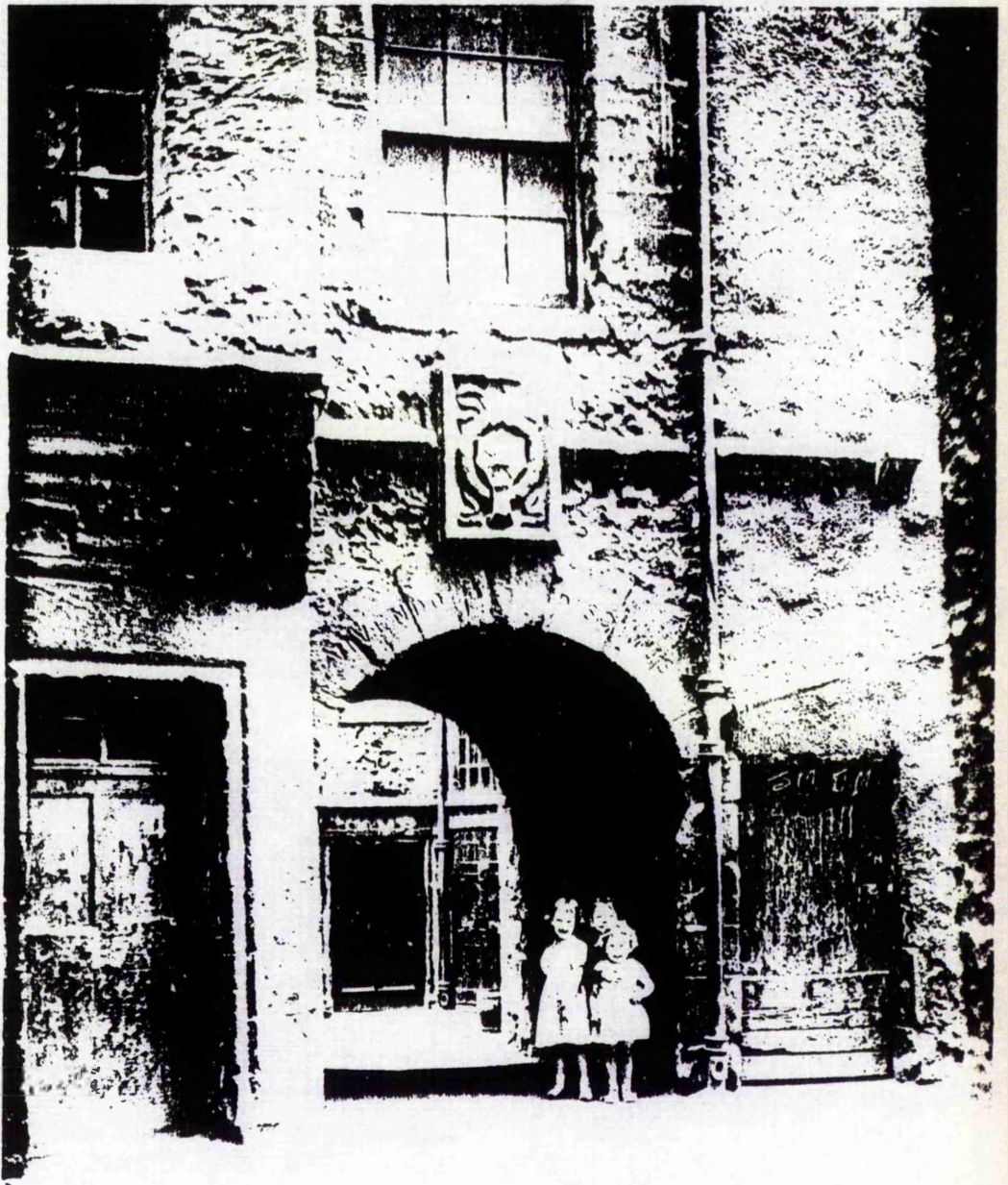


Figure 2:





Figure 3:



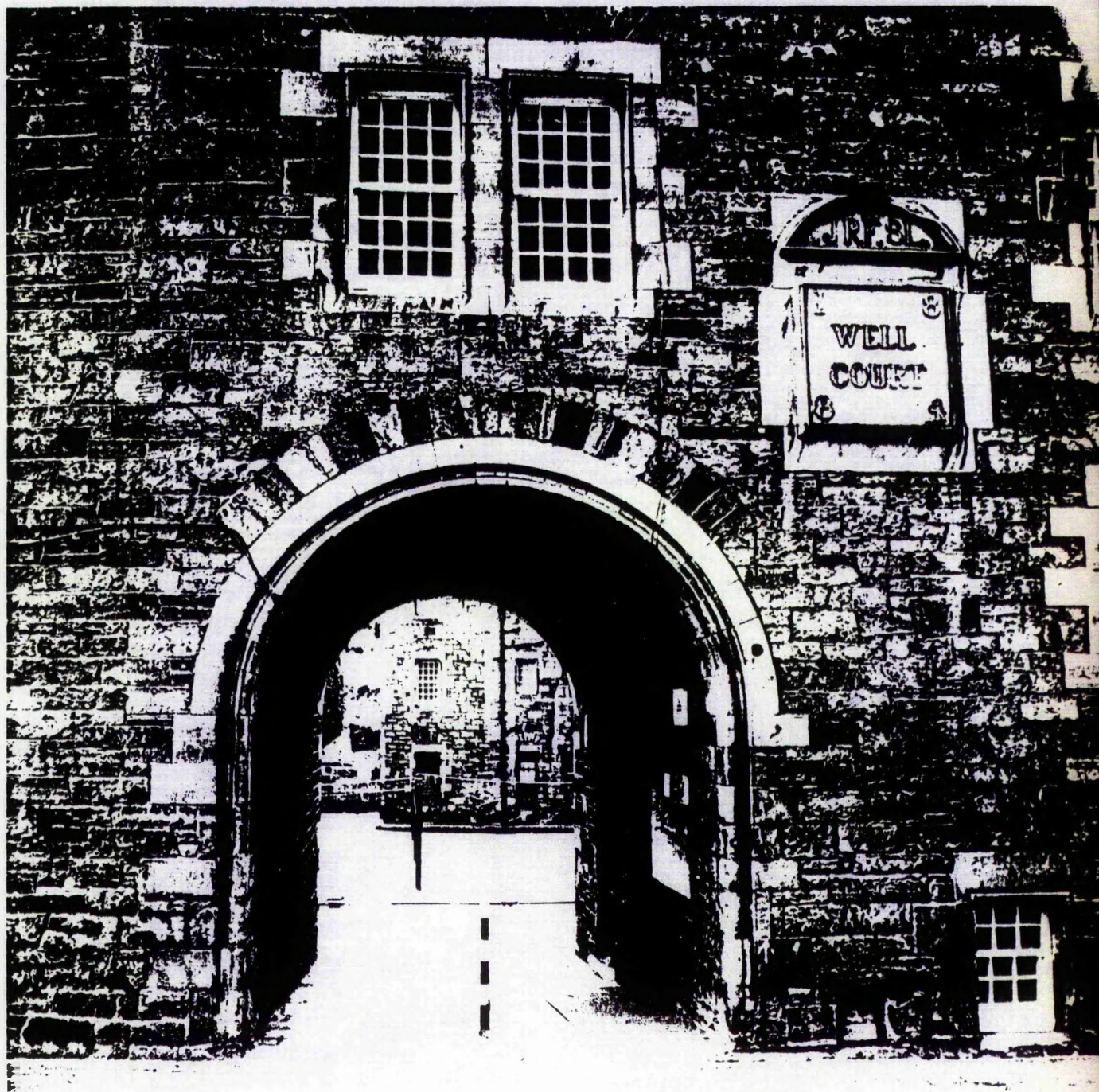


Figure 4:



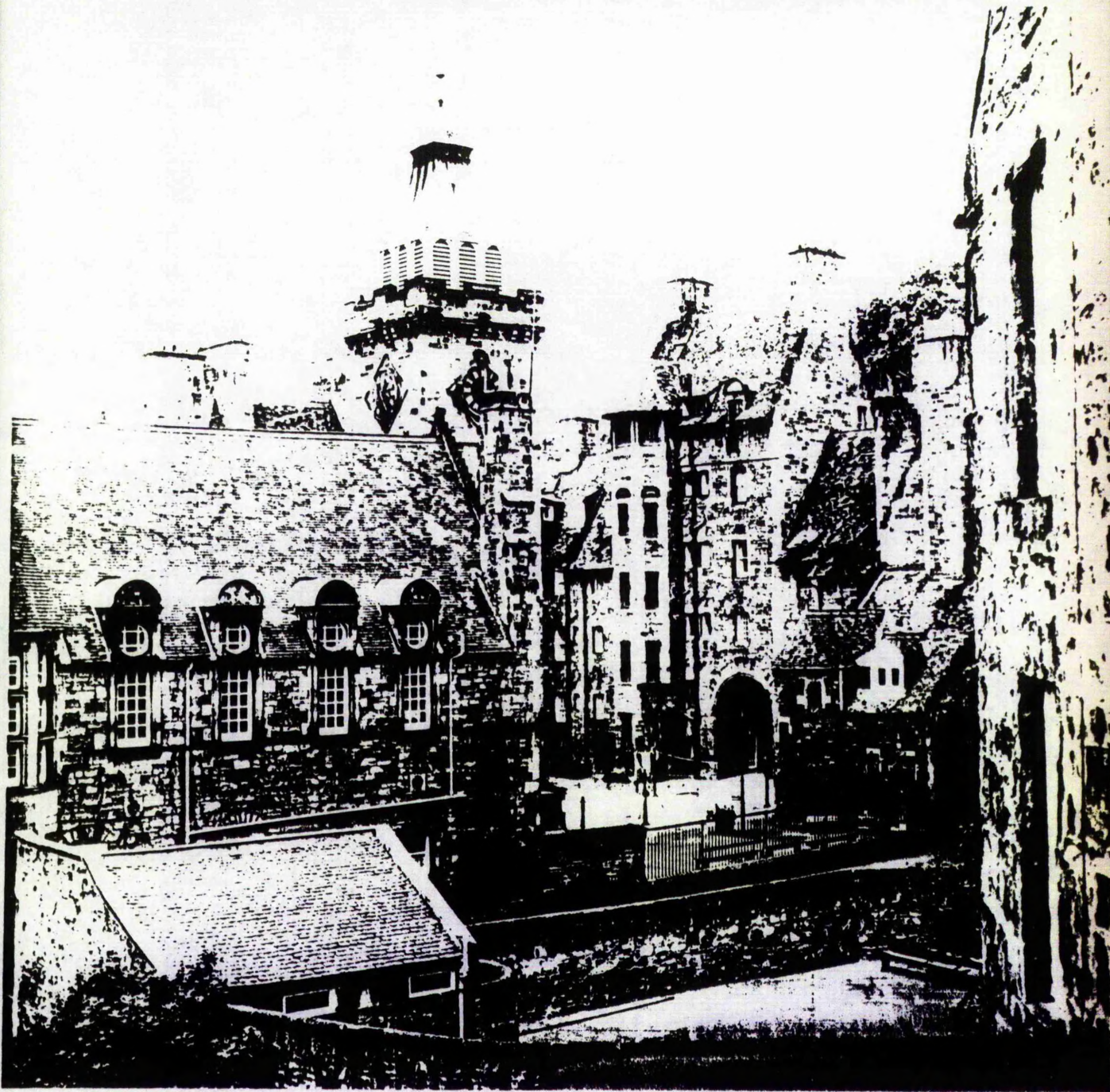


Figure 5:



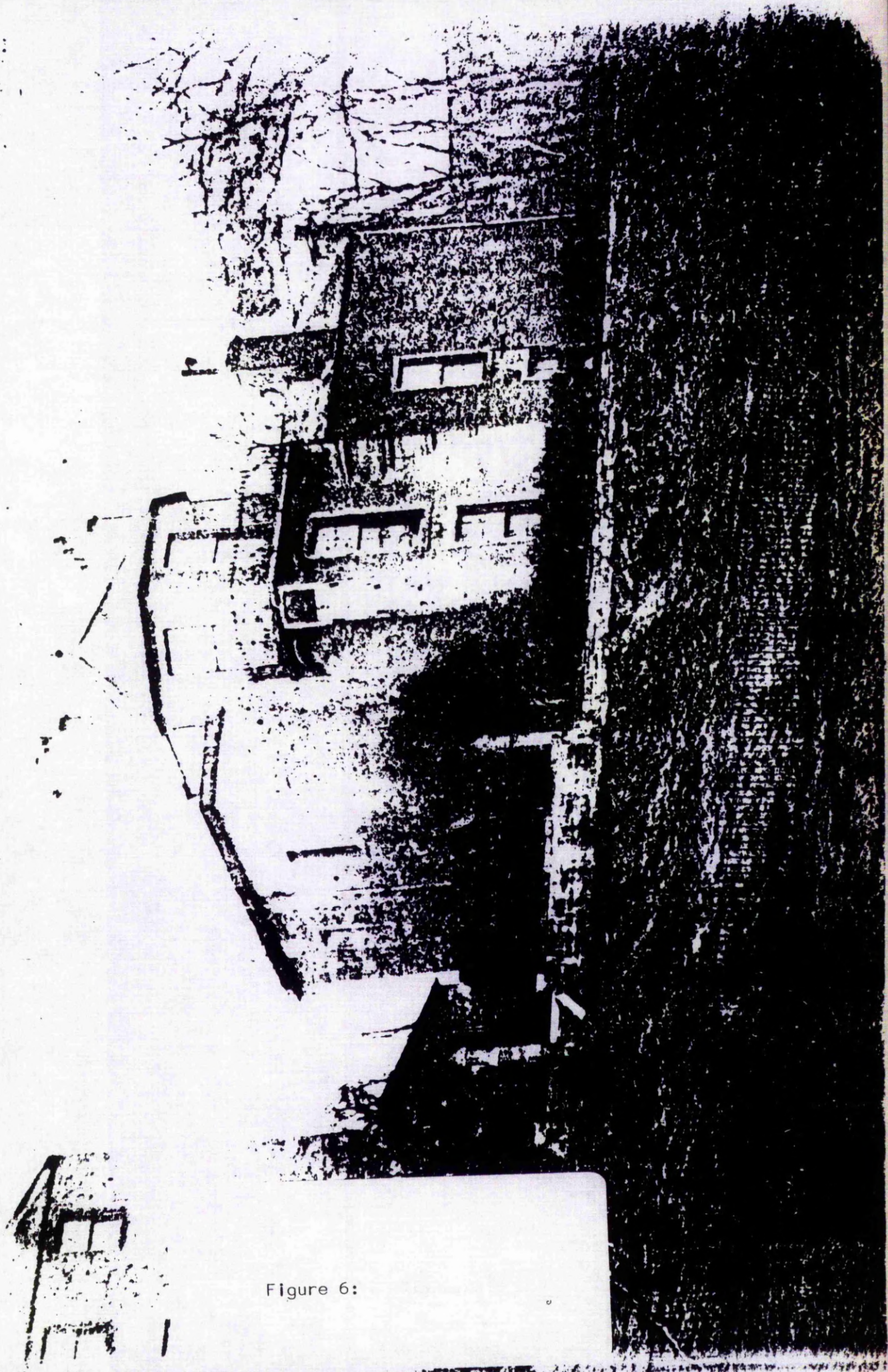


Figure 6:

Market economics for Geddes could not account for real social needs as opposed to the fictions of exchange and their calculus of the artificial. This he saw as the heart of the housing problem:-

'The current change in economic thinking, from academic Theory and working class struggle for monetary wages, to the observation and improvement of real wages, centres essentially upon this housing question. The "Family Budget" is again being seen to be essential to the Theory as to the practice of economics, and this word begins to express its ancient meaning, the order of the home.

The "Family Budget", to investigate which is the last great advance in economics, means the actual quantity and quality of home space, of clothing and feeding, of warming and lighting, of education and reading, of civilising or debasing pleasure...'

(8)

Besides the inspiration of his writings, Ruskin was also a direct practical example for Geddes. Reversing the order in which Geddes developed the Lawnmarket, first with a social settlement and secondly with a museum (The Outlook Tower), Ruskin started a small museum at Walkley outside of Sheffield which was:-

'arranged first for workers in iron, and extended to illustration of the natural history of the neighbourhood of Sheffield, and more especially of the geology and flora of Derbyshire'. (9)

At the enthusiastic request of local workmen who flocked to hear him, Ruskin went to advance some £2,000 of capital to establish a co-operative venture on a small thirteen acre estate, which became known as St. George's Farm. The workmen were to spend their time in useful labour and to raise the standards of craftsmanship, in this case, as bootmakers. Geddes was suitably impressed by these practical experiments of Ruskin's and mentions them with enthusiasm in his essay on Ruskin's economics.

### The Edinburgh Social Union

'Mr. Geddes intimated', runs the minutes of the inaugural meeting held at 81a Princes Street on 6th January 1885,

'that a society to which it was proposed to give the name the Edinburgh Social Union had been projected by a few friends, five of whom had assumed provisional power as office-bearers and had formed an interim committee. The proposed end was an organised co-operation with existing agencies



for the commonweal, and the establishment of such new agencies as might be necessary - insofar as both were found to be in accordance with scientific economics. Their immediate aim was to raise the standard of comfort of the poor by laying more stress on the value of beauty and order in the surroundings of life. They intended to begin by decorating public halls and other places, especially where the poorer classes meet; by encouraging window gardening, especially among children ... by providing entertainments; and in other ways in lines corresponding to those of the Kyrle Societies, but with such wider action as that embraced by the Nottingham Social Guild ...'

(10)

Geddes was elected to the executive which was to resolve at its meeting two days later:-

'That the housing of the poor on Miss Octavia Hill's system should be at once added as the main project of the Society'. (11)

Geddes was the guiding hand of the society in its first year being elected to represent the Union at a Conference in London on the 28th January to read a paper on 'raising the standard of comfort of the poor'. He was a member of the decoration committee

and he offered a course of lectures on economic doctrines devoting the proceeds after expenses to the Society's funds.

By the end of the first year the Annual Report related that the Union was to manage two properties in the historic part of the Old Town, acquired by two of its members.

'The distinctive features of Miss Octavia Hill's system'

the Report went on

'which is being applied to this property by a staff of workers under the direction of a lady trained by her, may be shortly indicated as follows:-

(1) Payment of rent is strictly enforced, by which means a more regular return is obtained on capital invested, and the injustice is avoided of making the thrifty suffer for the thriftless.

(2) The surplus of rent, beyond what is needed for working expenses and to pay 5 per cent interest on the capital, is wholly expended on improving the property, and this forms an inducement for the occupants to remain.

(3) Such improvements are carried out gradually as they come to be appreciated; and the tenants themselves are, as far as possible, employed in the work.

(4) The rents are collected weekly by ladies, who undertake this task as a means of gaining influence among the tenants, and helping them with their counsel and sympathy.

(5) The principle is maintained throughout of bettering the condition of the poor, not by lowering their rent (which would merely tend to depress the rate of wages), but by giving them greater value for their money, and thus accustoming them to a higher standard of comfort'. (12)

Besides its firm paternalistic initiative in housing the Union was active in giving moral uplift and what it called entertainment for the poor. There were Magic Lantern Exhibitions, recitations and music in half a dozen different places in and around the Old Town including the Grassmarket. A Christmas Tree entertainment was put on for over 280 poor children. Decorations were completed in various public halls and rooms, such as the Robertson Memorial Hall in the Grassmarket and Courant Children's Shelter and some half dozen other locations. More substantial work



was in progress at the Sick Children's Hospital, the Cathedral Mission Hall, Water of Leith, and the Royal Infirmary. Art classes -wood carving twice a week and brass beating once a week - had commenced and over 2,700 plants had been sold at wholesale prices, courtesy of the School Board for children's window gardens.

The work of the Social Union was dear to Geddes' heart. He was to develop similar work and interests throughout the High Street and later at The Outlook Tower. Many of the active workers in the Union were to be close friends and professional collaborators with Geddes for life. Yet very soon and without any explanation which is in the minutes or any private correspondence, Geddes left the Social Union and went his own way. Lord Provost Whitson, who as Thomas Whitson, was Geddes' accountant, alludes to this in a letter to Edward McGegan the Secretary of The Outlook Tower, on September 27th 1933:-

'He had left the Social Union by the time I knew him. He used to say he was like the schoolboy who rang the bell and ran away and he certainly got blamed by the Social Union people for leaving them in the lurch after starting the organisation and giving them the ideas'. (13)

Geddes had reverted to the dominant Ruskinian influence, it seems. His interests in the Old Town were now to become educational and University reform, the housing of students, the development of intellectual culture - of art, architecture, literature, science: the rebuilding of Scotland's capital once again.

### **The Condition of the Old Town**

Most of Geddes' environmental and social improvements were concentrated around the Lawnmarket, which lay at the heart of the St. Giles Ward, the most unhealthy and problem-infested quarter of the city. When the New Town was built the Old Town was evacuated by the better-off classes and the remaining tenements, without a peer for loftiness in the whole of Britain, were "made down" as the contemporary parlance had it, or sub-divided to accommodate ever-higher concentrations of the poor. Over one-third of the population was Irish: a contemporary synonym for wretched poverty and destitution.

Three years after Geddes moved to James Court, in the centre of St. Giles Ward, a detailed house-to-house survey by the Burgh Engineer's office set forth (14) the sober statistical indices of the deprivation in the neighbourhood. In the ward there was a total

estimated population of 24,150, or one-eleventh of that of the whole city occupying an area of 211 acres or one twenty-eighth of the thirteen wards into which the city is divided. 'Strangely,' the Report commented, the area included:-

'the East and West Princes Street Gardens 36.7 acres in extent, and although these gardens are available for all classes, it is well known that the poor inhabiting St. Giles appear to think that they have no right to be there'.

The average density of the area was 114.5 persons per acre as opposed to the city-wide average of 45 persons per acre. In the Cowgate there was the unbelievable maximum density of 900 persons per acre. The death rate in 1888 was more than a third higher than in the rest of the city and one-third of the total Police Offences and Crimes for Edinburgh in the Returns to the Chief Constable were committed in St. Giles. The following tables give details of sanitary conditions and overcrowding in the Ward.

Particulars as to the Sanitary Condition of the Dwelling-Houses in St. Giles' Ward, as ascertained by a House-to-House Inspection - August 1889.

TABLE I.

NUMBER	APARTMENTS			RENTAL			OCCUPANTS	
Of Hses Inspected	No. of One	No. of Two	No. of Three or More	No. at £5 and Under	No. not exc. £10 and Over £5	No. exceed £10	Adults	Ch'drn
4454 *	1790	1430	1234	1336	1924	1194	15370	2941
							18311	

\*These totals are under the Return given by the Burgh Assessor in respect that Hotels and Lodging-Houses, etc, are not included.

TABLE II.

Condition of Houses												Condition of Common Stairs		
Insufficiently Lighted	Insufficient Light. and Dirty	Insufficient Light. Dirty & in Disrepair.	Insufficiently Light. and in Disrepair.	In Dirty Condition	Dirty & in Disrepair	In Disrepair Only	Uninhabitable	In Good Order	Unoccupied & not Inspected	Without Water Supply	Without Water-Closets	Without Gas Light	Insufficiently Lighted during Day	In Dirty Condition
76	29	222	72	242	964	737	176	193	126	91	565	31	46	261

TABLE III.

Of the above number of Houses there are 375 which are overcrowded. Particulars as to the cubic capacity and condition of these are as follows:-

Cubic Capacity per Head of Occupants		In Good Order	In Slight Disrepair	In Serious Disrepair	Uninhabitable	Total
Cub.Ft.	Cub.Ft.					
300 & above	280	20	59	18	8	105
279 "	260	16	42	9	5	72
259 "	240	16	43	6	4	69
239 "	220	18	26	5	0	49
219 "	200	5	20	6	4	35
199 "	180	7	14	3	3	27
179 & under.		1	10	3	4	18
Totals		83	214	50	28	375

Note: Twenty of the One-roomed Houses in the above Tables are under the minimum standard of 700 cubic feet, as required by the Act.

Source: Report on the Sanitary Condition of Saint Giles' Ward, as ascertained by a recent House-to-House Survey, Burgh Engineers' Office.

#### Housing Reform in Old Edinburgh

'As regards housing you have had personal experience?'

Geddes was asked before a committee investigating the appalling housing problems of the working class in Dublin in 1913. He was able to state that his qualifications as an expert witness were based on:-

'study and practical efforts during the past thirty years towards the improvement of dilapidated and deteriorated portions of Old Edinburgh...'

and that, advisedly, since

'The problem of improving a ruinous old city is very well illustrated in Old Edinburgh'. (16)

As we shall see Geddes' interest in Old Edinburgh was not really the problem the Dublin committee was seeking to solve: the housing of the working classes.

Rather it was the housing problem of the working classes that became the condition of the solution he in fact pursued: the cultural renewal of historic Edinburgh.

For as the Burgh Engineer's Report on the Sanitary Condition of St. Giles Ward showed in 1889, the James Court address to which Geddes had moved in 1886 was in a ward:-

'largely identical with that of the Ancient RoyalBurgh of Edinburgh' which

'must of necessity continue to be the very heart of Edinburgh, containing as it does the Municipal Headquarters, Law Courts etc. It will always be intensely interesting to visitors from all lands, on account of its historical antiquities, its haunts and dwellings of celebrities of bygone days...'

The Report's conclusions expressed an aim that Geddes was avidly to pursue:-

'Antiquarians and Historians are naturally and justly jealous of the march of Modern Sanitary Improvements, and it would undoubtedly be a great loss to deprive the Royal Old Town of Edinburgh of its many ancient features of interest in the substitution of common-place blocks of modern tenements'. (17)

The housing problem that provided the opportunity for Geddesian improvement was accounted for by the uniquely high scale of the tenement constructions and the proletarianization of the old quarters after the middle class moved to the New Town. The urban form of the medieval city left

'... Edinburgh as it was when surrounded by its Ancient City Walls erected under the Flodden scare nearly 400 years ago, with its dwellings densely compacted together in the immediate neighbourhood and under the protection of the Castle'.

The limited area within these walls, the necessity of mutual protection and defence, and the danger of extending the city outside its artificial barriers during these more lawless times, were the origin of the extremely narrow "closes and wynds", and the high towering "lands" of houses of either side in close proximity to each other.

'... as the City stretched itself beyond its ancient barriers the better classes gradually withdrew towards the ever-extending suburbs, and as time wore on the large mansions of former times were largely divided up into single-room dwellings until St. Giles Ward has now become the centre of slums of Edinburgh, and furnishes examples of some of the most obnoxious features of Edinburgh "slum" life. (18)

Ten years after he had arrived in the Old Town, Geddes had had a hand in improvements in over thirty-six tenements and closes in the High Street. On a salary of only two hundred pounds a year as a part-time professor at University College Dundee he had acquired so much property that his friends and collaborators formed the Town and Gown Association in 1896 to take the management and financial burden off his hands. The inaugural Prospectus of the Town and Gown Association gives a certificated inventory of assets and property of the impressive improvement empire that Geddes transferred to the Association:-

- (1) The Residential Houses, Student's Halls, Workmen's Dwellings, Shops and Building Sites, belonging to Professor Geddes.

.....£41,900



- (2) New properties arranged for settlement  
.....£ 6,155
- (3) Furniture, Furnishings and other Effects  
.....£ 6,155
- (4) Sums advanced by Professor Geddes for  
Educational Undertakings of University Hall,  
to be secured by the Association and bearing  
interest at 5 per cent  
.....£ 757
- (5) Sum towards Reimbursement of Professor Geddes  
for Capital outlays not represented in above  
Valuation, but incurred since 1887 in founding  
and extending the undertakings now taken over  
by the Association  
.....£ 2,000

With his slim financial resources Geddes financed his considerable urban renewal enterprise from two basic outside sources. The first, what became known as Philanthropy at five per cent, (20) whereby well intentioned middle-class sympathisers provide capital at a modest return of five per cent; and the second, through the municipal authorities under the provisions of the new Housing of the Working Classes Act (1890).

Generally speaking Geddes used the latter to acquire property for demolition and the former to develop a property for some specific enterprise that attracted him, though as Thomas Whitson, his accountant, said (21) when Geddes 'got bitten with the idea of buying property in the Old Royal Mile'

'Much of it he had a definite reason for. Much of it he bought because someone came along and persuaded him it was a bargain...'

In seeking the support of private capital Geddes unsqueamishly continued Octavia Hill's hardnosed realism. He plainly assured prospective investors in the Town and Gown Association that:-

'its undertakings are by no means of a "philanthropic" or eleemosynary nature. Its financial basis is simply to utilise and develop openings for Home Investments, which rest essentially upon good heritable security, and consequently yield a moderate but adequate steady return. The civic and academic aims of the Town and Gown Association are thus capable of a strict business statement...' (22)

Although Geddes himself was never to profit from his own ventures - wherever he did temporarily, he soon sank his returns in new schemes immediately - he could truthfully say to new investors in Town and Gown that the improvements in the High Street 'have been hitherto carried out at the risks and charges of Professor Geddes alone', and that 'he has also acted to a considerable extent as an unpaid agent for other private investors'. (23) His approach can be summed up by the advice he received in a letter from the solicitor who did all his conveyancing, James MacDonald:-

'You ask how you can make use of friendly offers in the furtherance of your schemes for the acquisition of house property in Edinburgh and the turning of the same, thereafter, to better and more public spirited purposes than achieved by present owners, whilst, on the one hand, you safeguard your friends' money; and on the other maintain your independence ... you can hardly make a mistake by buying anywhere in your quarter of town, if you buy plenty and you buy in blocks. (24)

The second source of finance Geddes was to exploit with his innovatory business acumen was in the opportunities provided by the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act. Under the Part I of this Act.

local authorities were obliged, on being satisfied by official representation of the unhealthiness of an area, to pass a resolution declaring the existence of an unhealthy area and to proceed to make a scheme for improvement. Section 12(3) of the Act empowered the local authority to:-

'engage with any body of trustees, society or person, to carry the whole or any part of such scheme into effect upon such terms as the local authority may think expedient...' (25)

The Edinburgh City Fathers established such an Improvement Scheme by resolution on 9th November 1892 for ten unhealthy areas within their jurisdiction and Patrick Geddes was appointed as the intermediary on their behalf in area F, which was the Lawnmarket.

The process of declaring and implementing Improvement Schemes was not always precise and often demanded pragmatic improvisation as circumstances required. Geddes had no formal agreement with the town council to act as intermediary in Area G, centred on Riddles Court on the south side of the Lawnmarket but he effectively took on the role. He was allowed a broad interpretation of his brief by the city authorities and he often prompted other parties to act in his stead. He was happy, for example, to allow Lord

Rosebury to finance the restoration of Lady Stairs House or a certain Dr. Barbour to do the same in White House Close in the Canongate or to enjoin the Church Commissioners to improve the facades along Bank Street on the Mound. However, the improvisation and ad-hocery would often lead to misunderstanding. Geddes' solicitor, John McDonald, felt constrained to call on the authority of the Lord Provost when William Skinner, the Town Clerk, tried to avoid responsibility to the city for the payment of certain properties by Geddes. The strange legal and administrative circumlocations inherent in the Council engaging parties like Geddes to act for it were brought out in the Lord Provost's letter of instruction that MacDonald quoted to the Town Clerk:-

'will you please give Mr. MacDonald', the letter ran,

'instructions to purchase at once in the name of Professor Geddes but for the Town Council and on the responsibility of Councillor Mitchell Thomson, Councillor MacLaren and myself all the property in Lawnmarket both sides of which was shown on your plan today and which the Council resolved to include in the provisional Bill. As there was some difficulty about the Council as a whole giving the order for private purchase the two gentlemen

named are to share the responsibility with me. Professor Geddes has already agreed to act as our intermediary, Mr. M. may threaten "The Housing of the Working Classes Act" should the vendors wish to deal with the Town Council and withdraw their offers to Professor Geddes'. (26)

Thomas Whitson suggests that of the many properties Geddes acquired in the Old Town the Gown component comprised the area from St. Giles Street to Ramsay Gardens, that is to say the Lawnmarket. The Town part (although including a few houses in the Lawnmarket) was basically in the Canongate down to Holyrood. His major effort centred on the Lawnmarket and the copy of his own map from the City Archive shows, in the areas coloured red, what a massive restructuring of the area was the responsibility of his hand. The two maps of the City Improvement Scheme illustrate how he used the city powers and finance to open up closes by the demolition of back-court infill. As he concluded in a report to the City Improvement Committee on 9th February 1894:

'with your clearances in the closes behind and with my rebuilding in the Lawnmarket (it) will leave little to be done in the area'. (27)

The buildings surrounding what had become the narrow passageways into Wardrop's Court, Baxter's Close, Lady's Close and Gladstone's Close were torn down, leaving the large open space still seen today. Numbers 455 - 475 Lawnmarket, which backed onto Wardrop's Court were demolished and a new tenement with workmen's houses and shops and a bakery on the ground floor were reconstructed, paid for by one of Geddes' students, William Wilson. S. Henbest Capper was the architect. At one period part of this block was used as a women student's hall of residence known as Crudelius Hall.

In less than ten years Geddes had converted this area around the Lawnmarket into what was principally a student quarter. He describes (28) the history of this rapid and remarkable transformation at the beginning of the Town and Gown Association Prospectus:-

'Thus the beginnings of University Hall were made by renting and furnishing three small flats on the Mound, which were entered by only seven students on 1st May 1887; yet demand soon justified taking in the whole tenement, which has ever since accommodated eighteen or twenty, and was taken over last year as a house for students of New College.

Bailie MacMorran's House, Riddle's Court, was next purchased, restored, and opened in 1890 with only three residents; yet continued demand justified the acquisition of Ramsay Lodge and Ramsay Garden in the same year, while new buildings were begun at the Castle Esplanade in 1892. In May 1893, seven houses and sets of chambers became occupied; one house receiving students as private boarders, while the rest were for old residents and others interested in the Hall. During 1893-4 eight more dwelling houses were built and four altered and improved, while Ramsay Lodge was greatly enlarged, to accommodate more than thirty residents. A commanding block of buildings in St. Giles Street (formerly occupied by the Scottish Leader newspaper) was purchased at Whitsunday 1895, and after alterations was opened in October following as "St. Giles' House", accommodating above twenty residents. Increased accommodation is again necessary, and hence the greater portion of the building at present in process of erection at the head of the Mound has been taken on lease, and a number of old houses adjacent have been acquired, the whole to be opened in October as "Blackie House". In 1893 "Crudelius House", for ladies, was opened in the upper portion of a new block of workmen's dwellings then erected in the Lawnmarket, while a second ladies' house is at present being arranged for in the same neighbourhood. The



student population of the quarter has thus increased in nine years about fifteenfold, and the total population of University Hall from ten to above two hundred souls.

The twenty family houses or sets of private chambers, built or renewed, have also been quite inadequate to supply the demand. Towards meeting this, plans have been drawn to continue the present group of Ramsay Lodge and Garden eastward to the Free Church College, thus giving a combined facade of a hundred and twenty yards, which it is hoped to group around a central archway and tower. These two masses of re-construction east and west of New College will thus essentially remodel the panorama of the Old Town viewed from Princes Street.

At the foot of the Royal Mile, in the Canongate approach to Holyrood, Geddes had a hand in encouraging the rehabilitation of White House Close, Watergate and Abbey Sanctuary.

It would be misleading to suggest that Geddes did not develop any improvements for workmen's housing, as he was only too defensively aware in one of his reports to the Directors of Town and Gown:-

'Though the great proportion of the old houses and householders remain the same, the place of the very worst slums and their inhabitants has been taken (not mainly by students - though it will not be regretted that three important nuclei of a university settlement, including a house for women as well as two for men have thus been provided) but by skilled artisans. The modern or modernised two and three-roomed houses with bath etc, are eagerly taken by workmen (printers and others) to whom a central position is important...'

and further on the same report:-

'The number of artisan dwellings of not more than three rooms has only been reduced by 21 through their (the Directors) operations (for the most part converted into students' houses), while on the other hand they have increased the supply of such houses by no less than 50. All of these, consisting of two or three-roomed dwellings, have been constructed on partly uninhabited sites, partly renewed in buildings already condemned and closed by the public authorities. In short their operations show a balance of 75% of increase in Old Edinburgh alone'. (29)

It would appear that Geddes is manipulating the mathematics here since he does not take into account the inhabitants displaced by condemnation procedures. Certainly the Dean of Guild's applications would suggest that the principal theatre of his operations, the Lawnmarket, was mainly an area where improvements were for students and related educational buildings. His Summer Schools, the Old Edinburgh School of Art, and the Outlook Tower, the cynosure of his neighbourhood empire: these were the gravitational forces that drew his interests and aspirations towards them.

### **Romantic Slum**

There was nothing novel or even original in Geddes' desire to harness the energy and the modest capitals of the professional classes in improving the social and housing conditions of the poor of Old Edinburgh. Indeed on that score he held no monopoly in Edinburgh itself. He turned away from that role by forsaking the Social Union that he founded. Neither did he follow the obvious model and found a Toynbee Hall University Settlement. In the guise of a settlement Geddes wanted to found a University. Rebuffed by the academic establishment and banished to a part-time chair (created for him by his childhood friend, Martin White) in the new University College in Dundee,

Geddes had to create his own one-man university, his 'collegiate townlet' his 'Northern Balliol' as he variously called his Lawnmarket experiments. Through the 1890's he established his research centres, his summer schools, bringing in people like William James from Harvard and gathering round him supporters and student followers like H.J. Fleure, J. Arthur Thomson and Victor Branford. Edinburgh University developed its own student settlement quite independently of Geddes. Developing out of the Home Student Mission at the New College, it moved to the Pleasance and it eventually emerged on the Toynbee model with its own Residence and Warden.

The slum that Geddes moved to in 1886 was a slum with a difference: buried beneath was Scotland's historic capital. On the 'Bass Rock upon dry land', as Stevenson called it,

'If you were to set it somewhere else by itself, it would look remarkably like Stirling in a bolder and loftier edition. The point is to see this embellished Stirling planted in the midst of a large, active, and fantastic modern city...'

Edinburgh's slum, then, was a city within a city:-

Figure 7: Royal Hospital for Sick Children.  
Mortuary Chapel Mural, West Wall by Phoebe Traquair.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 8: Royal Hospital for Sick Children.  
Mortuary Chapel Mural, North Wall by Phoebe Traquair.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 9: Ramsay Lodge.  
James Watt by John Duncan.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 10: Ramsay Lodge.  
The Awakening of Cuchullin by John Duncan.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 11: Ramsay Lodge.  
Napier of Merchiston by John Duncan.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 12: Ramsay Lodge.  
The Journey of St. Mungo by John Duncan.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 13: Ramsay Lodge.  
Charles Darwin by John Duncan.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 14: Ramsay Lodge.  
Lord Lister by John Duncan.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 15: Ramsay Lodge.  
Sir Walter Scott by John Duncan.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.

Figure 16: Ramsay Lodge.  
Michael Scot by John Duncan.

Source: R.C.A. H.M.S.



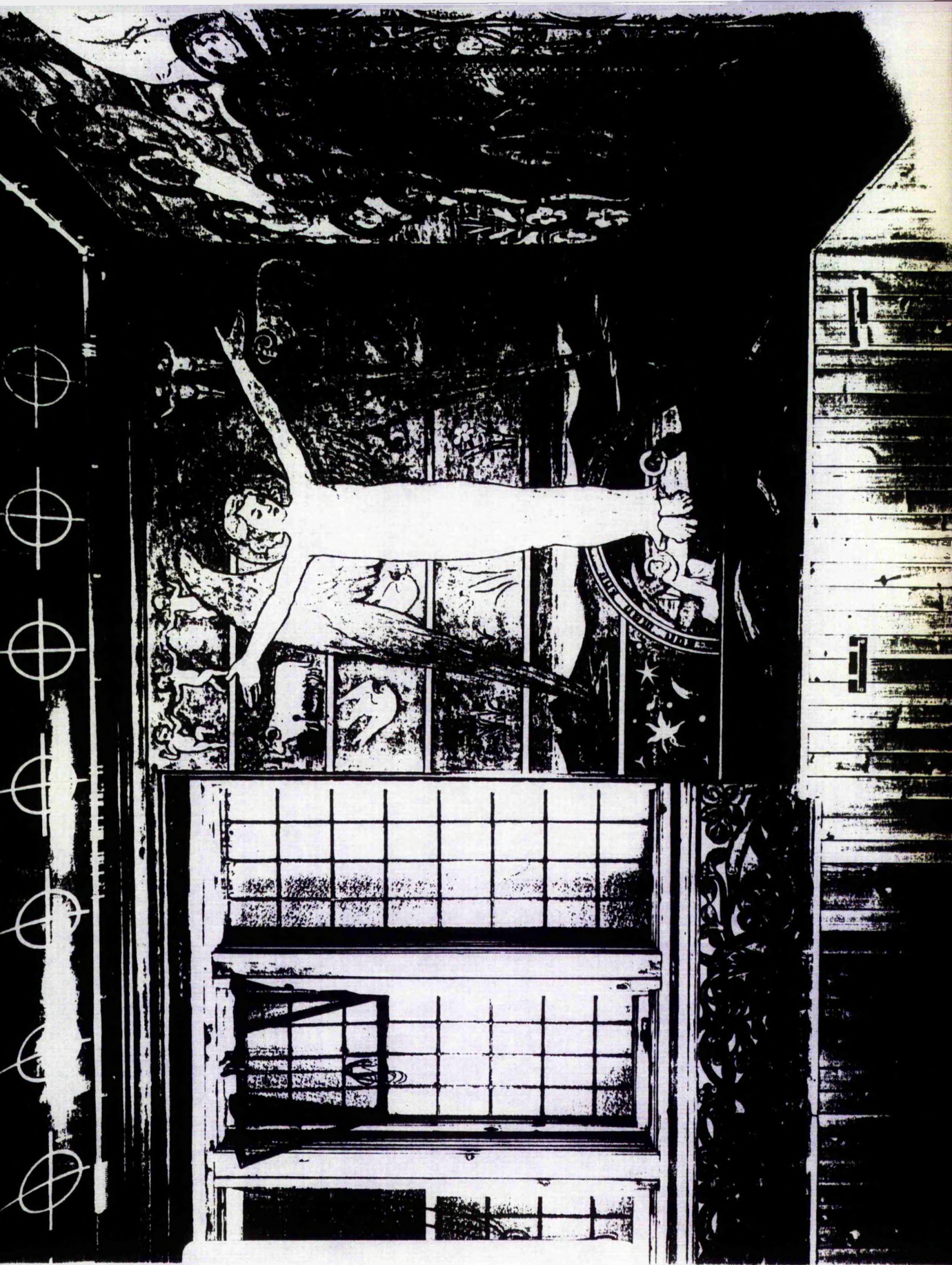


Figure 7:



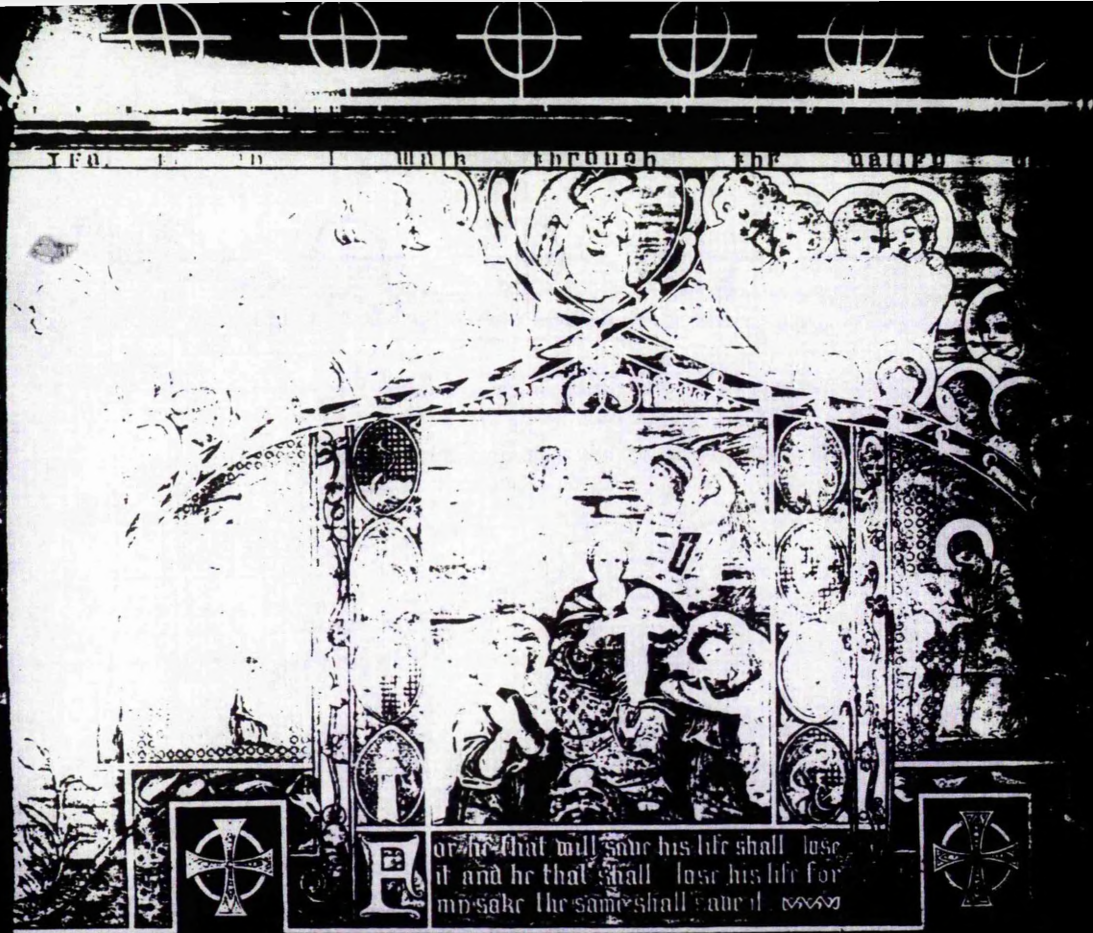


Figure 8:





Figure 9:





Figure 10:





Figure 11:





Figure 12:



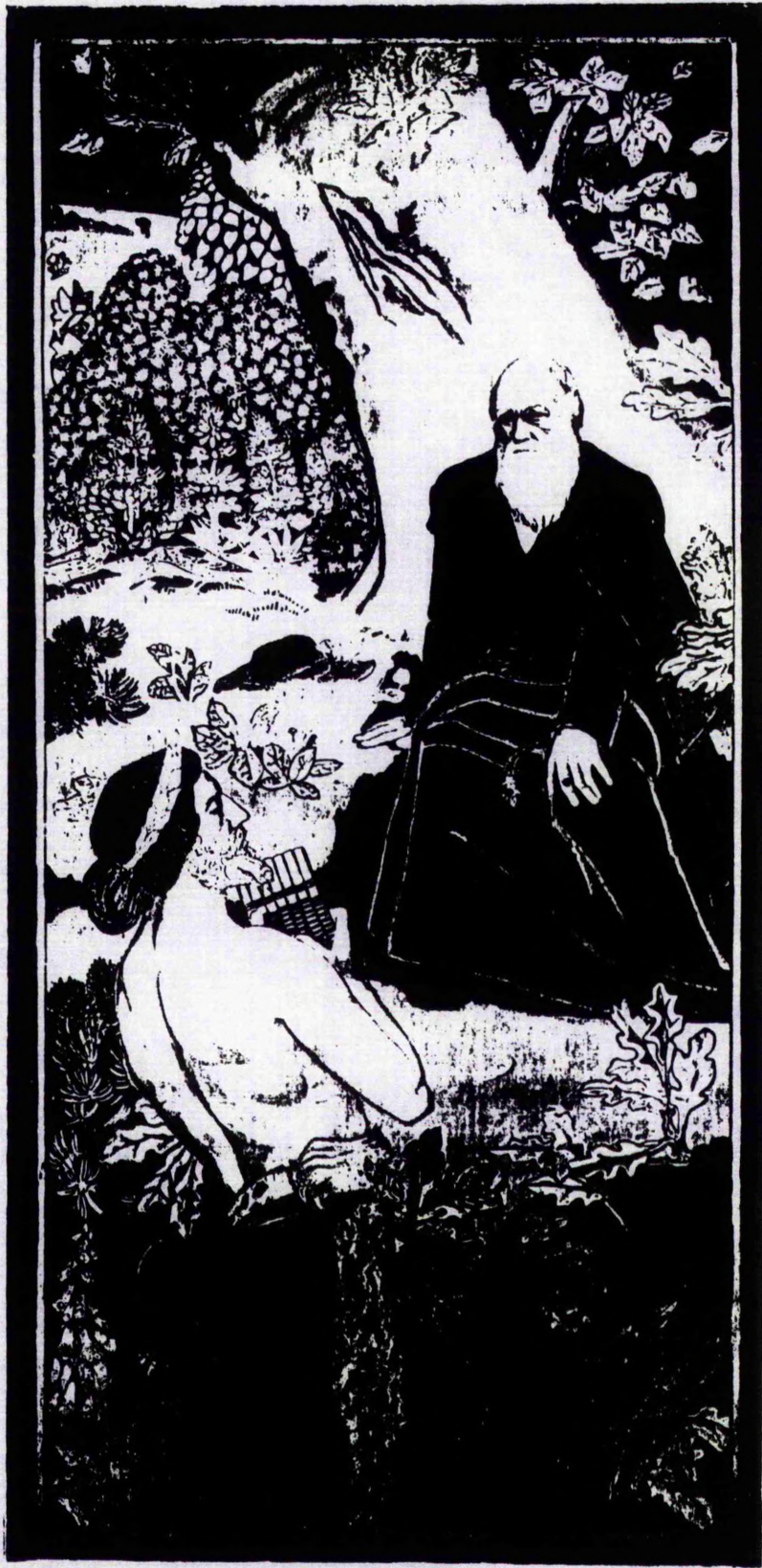


Figure 13:





Figure 14:





Figure 15:



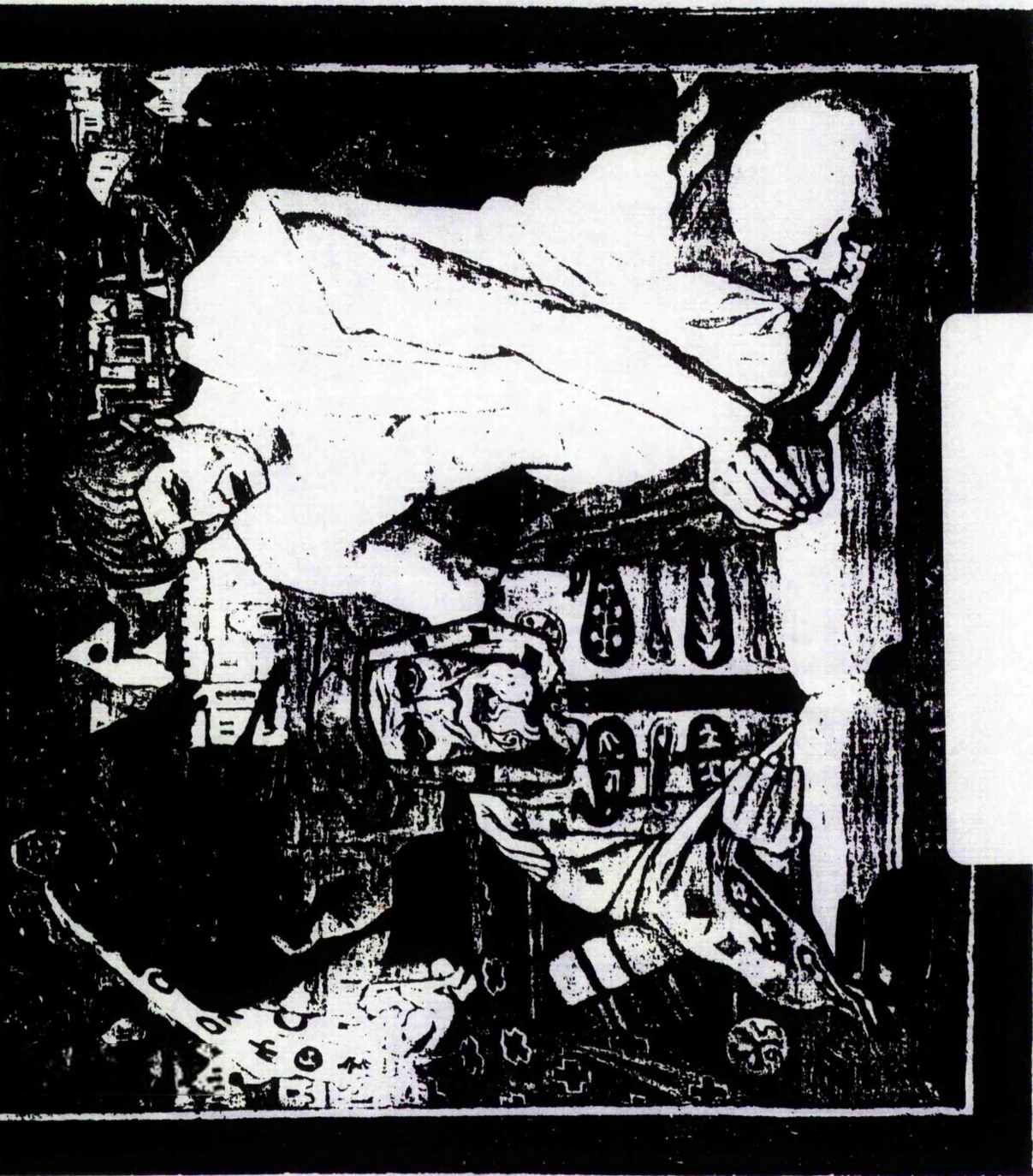


Figure 16:

'There is a spark among the embers; from time to time the old volcano smokes. Edinburgh has but partly abdicated and still wears, in parody, her metropolitan trappings. Half capital and half country town, the whole city leads a double existence...' (30)

It is to Stevenson that Geddes turns as the 'ultimus Scotorum' 'on that solitary Samoan hill' as a symbol of youthful renewal in a remarkable essay on The Scots Renaissance in one of his most successful attempts at kindling the Celtic cultural revival in the Lawnmarket: the four volumes of the Evergreen. Geddes sees Edinburgh as an 'ice-pack of frozen culture':-

'The current resuscitation of Old Edinburgh more unnoticed just because more organic, is hence still a deeper sign. First came the opening up of the Cathedral, the rebuilding of the City Cross, then the Castle-Gates and Parliament Hall. Now the old courts and closes from Holyrood to Castlehill are slowly but steadily changing, and amid what was and is the most dense and dire confusion of material and human wreck and misery in Europe we have every here and there some spark of art, some strenuous beginning of civic sanitation, some group of healthy homes of workman and student, of rich

and poor, some slight but daily strengthening reunion of Democracy with Culture; and this is no parliamentary and abstract sense, but in civic and concrete one'.

In one of his many lectures on Edinburgh (31) Geddes defines the challenge he has set himself in Old Edinburgh with a Lenin-like concreteness: Here we are in the slums. How are we to get out? - he entitles his lecture. His ideal, he writes, 'among a space of foul confusion between St. Giles the Tron and Cowgate' is to create a 'New Old Edinburgh again':-

'An idea, which I venture to believe, the time has now come clearly to formulate, that of doing in our day and generation what our grandfathers did in theirs - again making of a New Town which in its day should be the most important example of modern Europe'.

He concluded:-

'We all desire to see the most and best made out of Edinburgh. Many desire to see her a capital again. Let her do this and she would be Capital indeed: let her fail to do it and all the Parliaments in the world will avail her nothing'.

Geddes was eager to make the leap from Victorian sanitary engineering to cultural renewal of cities. What was to become called town planning he preferred to call civics. In one of the many neologisms he coined he said civics was based on ethno-polity. The origins of his ethno-polity lay in his experience in Edinburgh's Old Town.

## Footnotes

1. Robert Louis Stevenson: Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh, London, Chatto & Windus, 1894.
2. National Library of Scotland, Geddes Collection, MS 10524.
3. See the introduction to Helen E. Meller's The Ideal City, Leicester U.P., 1979, for a general discussion of the parallels in the work of Geddes and Barnett.
4. Jose Harris, William Beveridge A Biography, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977, p. 44.
5. The Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, Volume V, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index as to Scotland, London, 1885, p. 37.
6. See the Prospectus of the Town and Gown Association, Strathclyde Papers, T-GED 12/14/3, p. 8.
7. From Patrick Geddes, Edinburgh to John Ruskin, 12th October 1882. N.L.S. MS 10508 (A).
8. Patrick Geddes, City Development A Report to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, Irish U.P., Shannon, 1973, p. 34.
9. W.H.G. Armytage, Heavens Below: Utopian Experiments in England 1560-1960, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1861, p. 290.
10. Edinburgh Social Union, Minutes Book, Central Library, Edinburgh.
11. Ibid.
12. Edinburgh Social Union, Annual Report for Year Ending 1885, Central Library, Edinburgh.
13. Thomas B. Whitson to Edward McGegan, September 27th 1933, N.L.S. MS 10601.
14. Report on the Sanitary Condition of Saint Giles Ward, as ascertained by a recent House-to-House Survey.
15. Op.cit, p. 30.
16. Report of the Departmental Committee on Housing Conditions of the Working Classes in the City of Dublin, Cmnd. 7317, London 1914.
17. Op.cit, pp. 1, 3 and 4.

18. Ibid.
19. Prospectus of the Town and Gown Association Limited,  
n.d. Strathclyde Papers T-GED 12/14/3.
20. See John Nelson Tarn, Five Percent Philanthropy, An  
account of housing in urban areas between 1840 and  
1914, C.U.P., Cambridge, 1973.
21. Thomas B. Whitson to Edward McGegan, September 27th  
1933, N.C.S. MS 10601.
22. Prospectus, op.cit.
23. Ibid.
24. James MacDonald to P.G. 26th November 1891, N.L.S. MS  
1025.
25. C.E. Allan: The Housing of the Working Classes Acts,  
1890-1900. (London, 1901), p. 19.
26. Lord Provost Russell to John Cooper (City Engineer),  
16th September 1892, Edinburgh City Archives Bundle  
34.
27. P.G. to the City Improvement Committee of the Town  
Council, 9th February 1894.
28. Prospectus op.cit.
29. Ibid.
30. R.L.S. Stevenson: Picturesque Notes, (London, 1879).
31. University of Strathclyde, Geddes Papers, T-Ged  
7/2/19.



## Chapter 2

### Patrick Geddes and the Regional Idea

The scheme is a great one - that of planning the culture future of Edinburgh - as a renascent capital - and of Scotland as again one of the great European powers of culture - but where are the men for this?

Patrick Geddes to Frank Mears.

'As the State took over the city', Anthony Sutcliffe writes (1) in a seminal essay seeking to define a discrete urban variable of analysis, 'the city disappeared'. Drawing on recent political economy analyses of urbanism Sutcliffe argues for the significance of the urban phenomenon in late nineteenth-century Britain in three areas:

The first is the development of a distinctive urban culture derived mainly from consumption patterns in very large cities. The second is the growing importance within the domestic economy of the complex of processes which create and maintain the urban physical environment. These processes are at their most intricate in the largest cities.

The interaction of these two areas of activity tends to produce a force - urbanism - which is capable of influencing the evolution of the mode of production, partly through impact on political perceptions and processes. These latter form our third area.

In the case of Scotland one may speak of the city taking over the State as the State disappeared. The same may be said of Ireland. In the peculiar political geography of these islands this left a particular relationship between those shorn lambs, the provincial metropolises of Edinburgh and Dublin, divested of their constitutional statuses and political superstructures, and London the imperial metropolis, swollen with external empire.

In an essay published two years earlier on the emergence of town planning systems in Germany, Britain, the United States and France, Sutcliffe advances the view that in the first decade of the present century environmental debate in Britain presented two rival solutions. The first was the well-known garden city idea developed by Ebenezer Howard in 1898 in his Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform. The second was the town extension concept derived from German experience and advocated by T.C. Horsfall in The Example of Germany published in 1904.

In terms of the first town planning legislation to be formalized in statute, the 1909 Act, it was the town extension idea that was to have the influence, but the garden city was eventually to triumph in the 1940's, a component of a comprehensive planning system. As part of the intensive public and professional debate

before the passing of the 1909 Act, Sutcliffe's notion of two rival solutions carries conviction. In the wider perspective of the then contemporary debate, however, a third tradition is distinctly identifiable; the regionalist ideas classically associated with Patrick Geddes.

Geddes' regionalism was rooted in opposition to the metropolis. For him the metropolis did not mean the functional definition of contemporary geography, the large city, but the dominant capital city, as in the Oxford English Dictionary's definition:

'the chief town or city of a country; especially the one in which the government of a country is carried on: a capital'.

Geddes' attitude to London is representatively summarized in a letter (2) from Bombay in 1915 to his daughter, as she and her husband contemplate a move there after their marriage:

'I often like to think of you continuing our home, with a place in it now and then for the boys when they return to the stern old mother, Scotland, which is so reluctant to employ her sons - other than with sordid labour or futile words! Yet are we not most concerned with the renewal of the mother city to Art and thought once more?

Your mother and I have made now and then some beginnings of salon and centre, of which so many are needed; though our life has been too much interrupted by long absences and by cares and difficulties and over pressures and what not to give us the restfulness needed. Perhaps you may be able to carry on this better than we?

Or will you be swept away into the London vortices - which ever so allure and deeply drown? I wonder indeed. There are attractions and compensations and influences - pressures too of sheer need of work - and as you know I have felt them all and had to yield to them.

For myself! - but the intense feelings of the deteriorative influences of London upon the bodies and souls, the minds of spirits of its children, which I have had all my life, since I first came to it forty years ago, and that increasingly and as main induction of Civic Studies to this day - has always made me keep up the Edinburgh or neighbouring home for you young folk - despite the facts that I have failed to earn anything appreciable there, and that I necessarily fail to take root in London effectively also. You think London will be different? I doubt it. Its sheer magnitude will take an uplift after the war, its magnificence also; and I feel, like you two, the

attraction in helping in this. But won't it be Prussicated more than ever? Gross-Prussiburg-am-Thames! I fear so - and to help with minor cities attracts me far more. To restore the vision of Cities, in place of these dreary abstractions of 'State', and hideous blood alters of Empire, on which France and Germany, Russia, Austria, Turkey and we, too, sacrifice so much, in short to escape from Rome and her meglomania to Hellas and her ever-renewing civilization - that seems to me the political ideal'.

Here we have the essence of Geddesian regionalism, its genesis laid bare. The Greek culture-ideal as opposed to the meglomania of imperial Rome was to be realized in renewing that Athens of the North, Edinburgh, against the soullessness of the imperial war-machine of London. Edinburgh was to be the embodiment of Geddes' cultural regionalism, its prototype. It was to undergo a renaissance to become an anti-London, an antimetropolitan laboratory. Edinburgh's experience in this was to be an example to other cities, creating a chain reaction or domino effect.

J. Arthur Thompson, Geddes' life-long colleague, first as student then as Professor of Natural History at Aberdeen, writing in that very Ninetiesish publication, the Evergreen, catches perfectly in rather moony prose that early notion of renaissance

that Geddes sought to pioneer in Edinburgh:

'And we have many cities that are called to a splendid future, if men were only wise. Before all others there is our own, unique in the world: 'A city that is set upon a hill'. Its houses are in mourning, and its streets have been washed with tears; but it has kept well its brave outlook over sea and land, its own gifts of sanity and eagerness. Paved with history, echoing with romance, rich in unbroken intellectual tradition - what might this city not become! Meanwhile it sends forth its sons, there being little for them here to do, and they are of service in carrying on the wasting business of that metropolitan life which resembles so much the proliferation of a cancer. Yet the stirrings of better things are visible here also; there are those who do not hesitate to discuss already the tendencies of the local renaissance as a thing assured. Howsoever that be, there are many places in the land which seemed marked just now for hope to alight upon. In a vision of fair cities - Houses beautiful or about to be - we cannot miss the grey town in the east, splashed with sea-foam, cinctured by green fields and the paradise of golfers; nor the city of industry in the west, mistress of many ships, trafficking with all peoples; nor the granite city of the north, cold and clear, defined into



dignity, softened into music. Upon them all is the flying shadow of regret, the breaking light of promise. We see them - Durham, York and Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Dundee and Perth - all with a struggling sublimity, all dishevelled and disgraced, all alive and full of hope'. (3)

'To escape to Hellas', 'from the deteriorative influences of London', 'to help with the minor cities' as opposed to 'the metropolitan life which resembles so much the proliferation of a cancer', these, then, were Geddes' inducement to 'Civic Studies'. His regionalism was a culturalist concept. In the Minutes Book of the Outlook Tower it is recorded on 4th November 1913 that he proposed to the Executive Committee three schemes for the development of the Tower's work following on the triumph of his Town Planning Exhibition in Ghent that summer, when it had taken first prize. The third scheme proposed the formation of:

'a Greater Edinburgh Committee which should encourage and assist the citizens to maintain the position of Edinburgh as perhaps the chief culture city in the world'. (4)

Further evidence may be adduced that the cultural renewal of Edinburgh was Geddes' first priority in a letter he wrote to the chairman of the Outlook Tower committee eight years earlier. A major financial

crisis had precipitated a searching debate about the role and future of the Tower and in response to this he set out his definition as follows:

'...as regards the improvement and use of the Tower itself, I cannot put the work before us more clearly nor more boldly than has been done by Hector Macpherson in his leading article upon the meeting - that our problem is to take active part in 'the renewal of the intellectual life of old Edinburgh' - to realise 'the ideal of a home of scholarship and social study' to supply 'a place where all knowledge is represented and the result of study compared and systematised'. (5)

There is an important sense in which the garden city concept is antimetropolitan also. Both Ebenezer Howard and F.J. Osborn were quintessentially Londoners and quintessentially reformers of that 'sheer magnitude' Geddes speaks of. Yet the heartland of Howard's and Osborn's concern was with housing and land, which derived forms from the pastoral landscapes of the south east of England. It will be a vain search for any mention of land reform in Geddes' work and writing although these were burning issues of the day in Scotland when Geddes was active in Edinburgh. Land reform could not be ignored after Keir Hardie fought the Mid-Lanark election of 1888 against the background of the Highland Land League's campaign

forcrofting reform and that of the Land Restoration League, followers of Henry George.

Similarly the great Irish Marxist, James Connolly, was born and brought up within a few hundred yards of Geddes' Outlook Tower, and fought a municipal election in 1893 in the same ward in which Geddes was most active in urban renewal. Connolly's electoral manifesto included, amongst other things, the taxation of unlet houses and the erection of special low-rent workmen's dwellings but there is no mention of sympathy for this or meeting of Connolly by Geddes, although he did later meet Connolly's great comrade-in-arms, Jim Larkin, in Dublin. Despite the fact that Geddes had founded the Edinburgh Social Union in 1885, which resolved 'That the housing of the poor on Miss Octavia Hill's system should be at once... the main project of the Society', within a year of its founding and of his removal to the Old Town, he left the Union in the lurch. It was to the creation of a cultural renaissance in Edinburgh's ancient capital that he bent his energies.

It is little remarked upon that Geddes has no even minor environmental improvement schemes to show in Dundee although he held a post at the university there for some part of the year for over 30 years. Of the thousands of words he wrote on cities or Edinburgh it would be hard to find a single word on Dundee.

Similarly, in art, in civic improvement, in awesome slums and terrible deprivation, Glasgow was a city that during Geddes' time in Scotland no analyst or urban life could ignore or forget. The size of its problems and its wealth, its entrepreneurial and industrial dynamism, its social unrest and political agitation rendered it a representative symbol of the modern city nationally and internationally, yet it had little impact on Geddes in word or deed.

It was a late Scottish Romanticism, post-Scott and post-Stevenson, that informed Geddes' settlement ideal. Between the vastness of the London metropolis and the smoky slums of the industrial cities like Glasgow and Dundee, Geddes was attracted to a mediation in the smaller medieval burghs. Most of his work was done in the Old Town of Edinburgh; he showed interest in developing planning schemes for St. Andrews and Perth which never came to fruition. It is significant that the 1904 Carnegie study commissioned for Pittencrieff Park in Dunfermline was subtitled 'Parks, Gardens and Culture Institutes'.

Lewis Mumford and others have often commented on the pioneering nature of Geddes' Dunfermline study. It may well have been pioneering, but it is hard to see in it the precursor of land use planning as we now know it. Rather it gave Geddes the opportunity to restate in one concentrated and intensive study the conclusions and aspirations of his previous 20 years

of cultural experimentation in Edinburgh. Here it is plain to see his interest in moving beyond the mid-century Victorian reformers' city of hygiene and sanitation to a city of cultivation and culture.

Dunfermline, ancient capital of Scotland and city of Bruce, with its abbey and palace and historic centre allowed full place for Geddes' historical imagination.

Romantic Scotland was to be rescued and recast at a higher stage of cultural evolution.

Democratic plenty demanded by the newly enfranchized working classes was to be fulfilled in a Ruskinian evolution from quantity to quality. Restoration of abbey and palace, creation of palaces of Nature, Art and History, Japanese tea-houses; zoos, children's parks, open-air Greek theatres, concert halls, and statues and fountains by John Duncan were proposed to engender a cultivated citizenry to be the envy of the Arts and Crafts Movement's favourite comparison, the medieval cathedral cities. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that the solid citizens of Dunfermline on the Carnegie Committee declined to implement Geddes' plans.

**Metropolis and provincial metropolis:  
the genesis of Geddesian regionalism.**

'It was the dream of Professor Geddes', wrote (6) Elizabeth Sharp in the biography of her husband who was the principal collaborator in Geddes' publishing ventures,

'to restore to Scotland something of the older pre-eminence in the world of thought, to recreate in Edinburgh an active centre and so arrest the tremendous centralising power of the metropolis of London; to replace stereotyped methods of education by a more vital and synthetic form; and to encourage national art and literature. Towards the carrying out of these aims he had built University Hall and Settlement for students, artists etc. - According to Professor Geddes: 'Our little scholastic colony in the heart of Edinburgh symbolises a movement which while national at core, is really cosmopolitan in its intellectual reach'.

Geddes' attempts to counterpoise a renewed Edinburgh against the centralizing forces of London did not originate with him. He was to renew and revitalize a major Scottish tradition.

The greatest attempt to reclaim the fortunes of the Scottish capital was in the building of the Edinburgh New Town. The Proposals for carrying on certain Public Works in the City of Edinburgh clearly indicate that the intention of that major exercise in civic design was to counterpoise a major attraction against London's gravitational force:

'Among the several causes to which the prosperity of a nation may be ascribed, the situation, conveniency, and beauty of its capital are surely not the least considerable. A capital where these circumstances happen fortunately to concur, should naturally become the centre of trade and commerce, of learning and the arts, of politeness, and of refinement of every kind. No sooner will the advantages which these necessarily produce, be felt and experienced in the chief city, then they will diffuse themselves through the nation, and universally produce the same spirit of industry and improvement.

Of this general assertion the city of LONDON affords the most striking example. Upon the most superficial view, we cannot fail to remark its healthful, unconfined situation, upon a large plain, gently shelving towards the Thames; its neighbourhood to that river; its proper distance



Of this general assertion the city of LONDON affords the most striking example. Upon the most superficial view, we cannot fail to remark its healthful, unconfined situation, upon a large plain, gently shelving towards the Thames; its neighbourhood to that river; its proper distance from the sea; and, by consequence, the great facility with which it is supplied with all the necessaries, the evil luxuries of life. No less obvious are the neatness and accommodation of its private houses; the beauty and conveniency of its numerous streets and open squares, of its buildings and bridges, its large parks and extensive walks.

When to these advantages we add its trade and navigation; the business of the exchange, of the two houses of parliament, and of the courts of justice; the magnificence of the court; the pleasures of the theatre, and other public entertainments; in a word, when we survey this mighty concourse of people, whom business, ambition, curiosity, or the love of pleasure has assembled within so narrow a compass, we need no longer be astonished as that spirit of industry and improvement, which, taking its rise in the city of LONDON, has at length spread over the greatest part of SOUTH BRITAIN, animating every art and profession, and inspiring the whole people with the greatest ardour and emulation.

To illustrate this further, we need only contrast the delightful prospect which LONDON affords, with that of any other city, which is destitute of all, or even of any considerable number of these advantages. Sorry we are, that no one occurs to us more apposite to this purpose, than EDINBURGH, the metropolis of SCOTLAND when a separate kingdom, and still the chief city of NORTH BRITAIN'. (7)

Lord Provost George Drummond, who was the prime mover behind the foundation of the New Town and author of the Proposals, sought to reconstruct a new Athens of the North as answer to the massive dereliction that made Edinburgh eighteenth-century Britain's greatest inner-city problem. Then, as now, his answer was to recreate major service industries after the removal of the Court as a result of the Act of Union. In both his major policies his was an outstanding success. He created the great medical school at the university which grew in fame and prestige to become Europe's leading centre in the nineteenth century, and he instigated the development of the New Town to attract the gentry to reside in the city:

'It is a vulgar mistake, that the greatest part of our principal families chuse to reside at LONDON. This indeed is true with regard to a few of our members of parliament, and some particular families who were settled here before the union. The

rest go only occasionally; and if their stay be long, and their expense by consequence greater than this country can well bear, it must be entirely imputed to the present form and situation of EDINBURGH. Were these in any tolerable degree remedied, our people of rank would hardly prefer an obscure life at LONDON, to the splendour and influence with which they might reside at home. An uninterrupted country-life, is what they will never be brought to submit to. Attention to the forming an interest, the pleasures of retirement, or a taste for agriculture, may induce them possibly to pass some part of their time at their country-seats; more cannot reasonably be expected.

It might indeed be otherwise in ancient times, when the feudal customs prevailed, with their large dependancies and extensive jurisdictions. The institution of our government is now different: our manners must be different also. A nation cannot at this day be considerable, unless it be opulent. Wealth is only to be obtained by trade and commerce, and these are only carried on to advantage in populous cities. There also be find the chief objectives of pleasure and ambition, and there consequently all those will flock whose circumstances can afford it. But can we expect, that persons of fortune in SCOTLAND will exchange the handsome seats they generally possess in the country, for the scanty lodgings, and paltry accommodations they must put up with in EDINBURGH?

It is not choice, but necessity, which obliges them to go so frequently to LONDON. Let us improve and enlarge this city, and possibly the superior pleasures of LONDON, which is at a distance, will be compensated, at least in some measure by the moderate pleasures of EDINBURGH, which is at home'. (8)

The building of the Edinburgh New Town created the problem of Edinburgh Old Town, which had been abandoned by the middle classes on the building of the spacious squares across the valley of the Nor' Loch. It was socially daring in Geddes' time to move a mere 300 yards from the New Town to the Old Town, as he did with his wife Anna in 1886. The fact that Geddes went slumming has generally disguised the fact that it was not just any slum he moved to: beneath it lay Scotland's ancient capital which had been preserved by the precipitous topography of the crag and tail on which it was founded. The Old Town of Edinburgh, Robert Louis Stevenson was to write, was like a Bass Rock on dry land. Thus preserved, it provides Geddes with a whole town as a laboratory in which to practise his ideas of renewal.

It is commonplace to observe that after losing its statehood at the Act of Union the national identity of Scotland was preserved through its own peculiar institutions of the Law, the Church and Education.

The Old Town that Geddes moved to was a sacred matrix which encompassed all three: the Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the highest Court of Law housed in the old parliament, and the University of Edinburgh.

Rather than an incipient town planner it would be more accurate to see Geddes as an early Scottish cultural nationalist. He was the continuator of a Celtic Revival in the 1890's that paralleled the great Irish cultural renaissance in Dublin, which matched in its genesis that of Edinburgh. 'A key to an understanding of nineteenth century Dublin', a recent Irish historian has written, 'is the continuing sense of the loss of her native parliament. The Act of Union proved a severe, psychological blow to the city's self-esteem...'. It is no surprise that the great Scottish cultural nationalist of the twentieth century, Hugh MacDiarmid, claimed Geddes as the only precursor to his Scottish Cultural renaissance of the 1920's. MacDiarmid knew Geddes and was a frequent visitor to the Outlook Tower. After the Second World War he applied, unsuccessfully, to edit Geddes' posthumous papers. Only a retrospective incorporation of Geddes into the guise of a post-1947 government town planner could distort and repress what was his predominant cultural interests in Edinburgh in art, literature and architecture.

Of the Church, the Law and Education in renewing a sense of Scottish identity, Geddes' principal interest was in the Scottish University. He created a Latin quarter in the Lawnmarket of the Old Town, his own university, a northern Balliol as he once called it. Independently of the official university, which denied him a chair twice, he established an intellectual centre of gravity of great distinction through the establishment of five student halls of residence, residential quarters of intellectuals and artists in the Ramsay Garden, and the highly successful international summer schools. At the end of the life he founded his own university in the South of France.

**The anti-metropolitan legacy of Geddesian regionalism.**

'Yet when all these supremacies of the Great Capitals are expressed and even emphasised to the fullest metropolitan satisfaction, there is another process at work, little though the Meglapolitan may yet recognise it - Culture ever refuses to be completely concentrated, nor can the ultramontane ascendancy of Rome be repeated.

As even the culture supremacy of Paris was disputed in the Middle Ages by the use of Universities in every land, so again the supermacy of Paris or Oxford today in their own countries; as renewed Universities like Montpellier, and new ones like Liverpool, are increasingly bearing witness.

Every considerable city in short seeks to complete itself. It no longer contentedly accepts provincial inferiority; it finds itself with the means and increasingly the will to develop its own civilization within and not merely draw it from without. - Of fuller civic awakening, as distinguished from after all partial developments, examples are naturally as yet but few. One, as yet little realised even in the British Isles themselves, may however be cited here - the rise of Cardiff from the more export-centre of the South Wales coal-field which London still thinks it, to its rapid development and deliberate design as a regional metropolis; in fact as the fourth national capital of the British Isles; and determined to be more complete than Edinburgh or Dublin'. (9)

There are three identifiable regional traditions that stem directly from Geddes' work and influence. The first is that of the regional foundations of academic geography developed by A.J. Herbertson; the second,



the regionalist theories of local government developed by C.B. Fawcett. The third is the regional basis of town planning developed by Patrick Abercrombie.

A.J. Herbertson was a student resident in Geddes' University Hall in Edinburgh and his teaching assistant at the University of Dundee in 1892, and he often taught at Geddes' summer schools. 'One cannot exaggerate', E.W. Gilbert has written in a reassessment of Herbertson's work, 'the great influence that Geddes exercised on Herbertson's thought'. (10)

Herbertson took over as the head of the Geography School at Oxford where most of the future academic leaders of geography in British universities for the next 50 years came under his influence. Of his paper, The Major Natural Regions: An Essay in Systematic Geography, given at the Royal Geographical Society in 1905, Professor Dudley Stamp commented (11) 'that it would be difficult to cite any other single communication which has had such far-reaching effects in the development of our subject' and concluded that it 'is now fundamental to the teaching of geography in almost every country in the world'. Herbertson defined his natural regions as having 'a certain unity of configuration, climate and vegetation'. In this he was inspired directly by Geddes who had brought the methods of botanical survey to Scotland from his

great friend at the University of Montpellier, Charles Flahault. Herbertson's definition of a natural region drew on the first botanical survey of Scotland by Robert Smith and his brother W.G. Smith, on the survey of the geography and vegetation of the Highlands by Marcel Hardy, also inspired by Geddes, and on his own work on the distribution of rainfall.

Herbertson's regional concept derived from the biological side of Geddes' thought; that of C.B. Fawcett from the cultural and historical. C.B. Fawcett came under Geddes' influence and the concept of regional survey through Herbertson at Oxford. Fawcett it was who originated that major tradition of regionalism which persists today. His Provinces of England: a Study in Some Geographical Aspects of Devolution was commissioned by Geddes as part of the latter's postwar Making of the Future series and was a book-length elaboration of an earlier paper, the 'Natural Divisions of England'. Of the Provinces of England, W.I. Stevenson has commented that it 'justly made Fawcett's reputation and had great political influence but its ideas are pure Geddes'. (12)

Fawcett's work was obviously inspired by Geddes' Cities in Evolution and it made the classic connection that remains as powerful today as it did then: the relation between devolution to Scotland and Wales (and Ireland at the time) and the regional basis of local government. This Fawcett sets out in the opening of the Natural Divisions of England:

'The steady persistence of the Irish demand for Home Rule, together with the existence and growth of strong national sentiments in Scotland and Wales and a growing tendency towards a similar demand in those countries, was a prominent fact of public life in Britain before the war, and, unless the war should leave us totally exhausted, these demands are likely to be much stronger after it. Parliament was already over-burdened with the double task of trying, on the one hand to govern the Empire, and on the other to provide for and control the internal and local government of the forty-five million people in these islands. Either task was enough to absorb its full time and energies.

These facts led naturally to suggestions for lessening the work of the British Parliament by the devolution of some of its powers to a national parliament in each of the four countries: suggestions which were popularly summed up in the phrase 'Home Rule All Round'. In practice this would mean the transformation of the United Kingdom from a unified to a federal state, in which the subordinate parliaments would have such powers as the British Parliament delegated to them. To this suggestion as it stands one very serious objection is that one of the partners would have three-fourths of the total population, and more than three-fourths of the total wealth, and hence would inevitably dominate the federation.

The predominance of England would be increased if, as is probable, the British and English Parliaments sat in the same city; and there would be rivalry in prestige between the two. The position would be similar to that between the Prussian and the Imperial German Parliaments from 1871 onwards.

For such a position, and the many difficulties to which it would give rise, the obvious remedy is the division of England into several provinces each of which should have local self government on a par with Wales or Scotland. Such a division is also rendered desirable by the great variety of the problems of government in the different parts of England, and the magnitude of the task of providing for the local government of its thirty-four millions of inhabitants. It is probable that in an English parliament the congestion of business would soon resemble that which has been for many years the normal state of the British Parliament. Hence when the question of the devolution of parliamentary powers again becomes urgent, that of the subdivision of England will naturally arise.

If any such subdivisions is to be satisfactory it must be based mainly on geographical considerations. Thus the question may be phrased as 'What are the Natural Divisions of England'.  
(13)

It is well known that Patrick Abercrombie, the most influential town planner of twentieth century Britain, was deeply influenced in his approach to town planning by the ideas of Patrick Geddes. The received view in town planning was that Geddes was the initiator of survey as a precondition to plan, and that in this respect he did not advance the methods and techniques of survey to be of much use to those that followed him in the town planning profession.

Two points need to be made here. The first is that Geddes' notion of the valley section with its range of occupational types from hills to sea - hunter, miner, shepherd, woodman, farmer, peasant and fisherman - led into a conceptual cul-de-sac. As genetic essences that were carried over into modern regional cities, they furnished a still-born sociology. The second point is that Geddes' conception of survey was not the positivistic notion that eventually became strangled in bureaucratic technique after the 1948 Town Planning Act. For Geddes's was a normative conception of settlement. 'Except the ideal plan the city', he was to say, 'they labour in vain'.

The driving force of Geddes' regional city ideal was opposition to the London metropolis. On contemporary politics he was to say: (14)

'The movement of politics is no longer a question between Empire and nationalistic Home Rule, between Ulster and Irish Free State: it is really between centralized governments - and civic regionalism'.

The agitation for devolution in the late 1970's and the failure of the 1978 Scotland Act to be implemented supports the view implicit in Geddes' experience that only the Celtic periphery could provide the cutting edge for regionalization against the dominating sway of London. In the emergence of town planning in the 1930's the crisis of unemployment and the deindustrialization of the large industrial cities pushed Geddesian regional reform from the agenda. Its reemergence in the 1970's reaffirmed the classical connection between devolution and regionalization.

The depth and endurance of this connection is confirmed in the eloquent testimony of Fletcher of Saltoun in the debates on the Act of Union of Scotland with England some two hundred years before Geddes. It is astonishing and instructive to compare Fletcher's argument in his Account of a Conservation Concerning the Right Regulation of Governments for the common good of mankind written in 1703 and published in Edinburgh in 1704. Here Fletcher states the classical argument that it is the overwhelming dominance of London, which he compares to the

aggrandisement of Rome, that has upset the balance of nations and provinces. It is a strand of thought that continues unbroken to the Kilbrandon Commission on the constitution and reorganization of local government in the late 1960's:

'If instead of one, we had twelve cities in these kingdoms possessed of equal advantages, so many centres of man, riches and power, would be much more advantageous than one. For this city is like the head of a rickety child, which by drawing to itself the nourishment that should be distributed in due proportions to the rest of the languishing body, becomes so overcharged, that frenzy and death ensue. And if the number of people and their riches would be far greater in twelve cities than in one, which I think no man will dispute; and that these cities were such as are situated in convenient distances from each other, the relief and advantages they would bring to every part of these kingdoms would be unspeakable. ---- That London should draw the riches and government of the three kingdoms to the south east corner of this island is in some degree as unnatural as for one city to possess the riches and government of the world'. (15)



The town planning profession has claimed Geddes as a Founding Father by retrospectively fitting him into a post-1947 'normal' practice of town planning, in the Thomas Kunnian sense. Much of the essential thought of Geddes was marginalized in this way and Geddes was measured against the standards of 'normal' town planning and found wanting. But that begs the question of what is town planning. In his notion of the antithesis of regional city and metropolis against the background of his Edinburgh experience perhaps Geddes shall live another day.

## Footnotes

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## Chapter 3

### The Museum and the Exhibition: origins of the Outlook Tower

In May 1903 Patrick Geddes applied for the post of Director of the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art in Chambers Street and he wrote (1) to the interviewing committee of his qualifications:

- (1) a long and critical acquaintance with Museums and Exhibitions in general, and a concrete familiarity with the main departments, and even with many of the details of such a museum as that of Edinburgh;
- (2) a special and experimental intimacy with the problems of classification, and application of these to the departments of an Index Museum;
- (3) upon the experience of an educationist, whose essential problem has always been the awakening or refreshing of interest in student and teacher. For it is not enough to amass collections, nor even intelligently to display them; the most pressing problem of all is that of the museum-visitors - teachers, pupils, and public alike. It is to renew the healthy spring of wonder - in our day too much depressed - and to guide it onwards, as admiration towards art, as curiosity toward science. In a word, I should hope not only to administer and develop the Museum as a centre of educational supply, but to increase and improve the educational demand'.

The commencement of Geddes' long and critical acquaintance with museums and exhibitions must be traced to his unusual movement - for a Scottish student of his class and time - to South Kensington to study at the Royal School of Mines under Thomas Huxley in 1874. Huxley's system of teaching through detailed and daily laboratory practicals had been transferred to a new site at South Kensington the year before Geddes arrived to study biology. The School of Mines was only one of the institutions in the process of being developed in South Kensington which included the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Natural History Museum, in a vast and rich educational and cultural complex developed from the profits and initiative of the Great 1851 Exhibition at Crystal Palace. The classification of knowledge and the relations between the different components of knowledge and sensibility, from science through to art, as exemplified in the unique and adjacent concentration of cultural institutions at South Kensington, was to be a central preoccupation of Geddes' intellectual life. The classification of knowledge for Geddes was the royal road to the popularisation of knowledge, and both these interests, he believed, could be best realised in the educational opportunities, opened up by the museum. And coming full circle, Geddes believed that ameliorative social action, which for him was voluntaristic would arise from unity of popular education and formal systems of knowledge.

The most immediate stimulus to the Scots student's intellectual concerns was in the 'type' system of teaching developed by Huxley. In a supplement to Nature, on the occasion of Huxley's death, Geddes described the impact of Huxley's teaching:

'Nothing could be clearer than his demonstration of his well-chosen specimens, always sufficient for his exposition and argument, yet never in redundancy; for his essential method lay in the educative value of the type-series and collection for the student, as compared with the redundant, and bewildering wealth of the great museums'.  
(2)

To be able to see for oneself - this was the foundational principle of both Geddes' formal and popular conceptions of education; to have the specimen before one's eye was to allow for that vivid immediacy that he saw as the prime mover of educational development. He was fond of saying that all education began with wonderment. Huxley's pioneering example for Geddes was to provide the thing-in-itself, the specimen, as the centre of the learning exercise and to select a specimen as a type that would illustrate a whole class of phenomena. Professor F.O. Bower later in the same Supplement to "Nature" emphasised the originality and impact of Huxley's teaching innovation:

'... it is to Huxley's initiative that the current method of laboratory teaching of the biological sciences in Universities and Colleges is mainly due'.

'Up to the middle of the nineteenth century authoritative statement by teacher, rather than personal observation, was the source of knowledge for the ordinary student ... it is undoubtedly to Huxley that we owe the initiation of that systematic laboratory training which has now become general. He laid special stress upon personal observation at first hand as the leading feature of biological study, even for elementary students. He did not abolish the lecture-room, but he linked it with the laboratory, so that the student, duly primed with a vivid description of what others had seen, passed to the laboratory to see, confirm, or criticise for himself'. (3)

### **Popularisation and Specialisation of Knowledge: the Role of Classification**

The Victorian museum was a product of the mediation of two interests: the popularisation of knowledge and the increasing specialisation of advanced knowledge.



Until the middle of the nineteenth century museums had been vast repositories, middens, of scientific specimens and cultural artefacts for private research and the intellectual indulgence of scientists and men of letters. After the Great Exhibition in 1851 there was a quantum leap in demand for museums - permanent exhibitions - to serve a popular educational role for the edification of the middle class and increasingly for working class men and women. The genesis of the modern museum lay in the extension of its role from merely a storehouse of specialised research objects to provide also for public access and popular education. This necessitated innovations in structure and design and vastly increased amounts of public investment.

The design requirements of the modern museum therefore were twofold: to provide a layout for the access of the general public while at the same time preserving the specialised collections for advanced research. The most seminal and influential example of such a museum was the Natural History Museum developed on the same South Kensington site where Geddes had studied at the School of Mines. Hived off from the British Museum where the natural history rooms had become grossly overcrowded, the new Natural History Museum at South Kensington was planned according to the ideas of its chief investigator Richard Owen, its first director.

The informing principle of Owen's conception was that of an Index Museum which should be a 'microcosm of nature itself, and large enough to exhibit the varieties and development of life on earth'. It should be able to show 'how the type of the class may have risen from a lower, or may, be mounting to that of a higher class'. (5)

In the working out of this conception the Central Hall on the ground floor of the museum, suitably presided over by a sculptured figure of Charles Darwin, was to provide an introductory and systematic index to the whole 'microcosm of nature' on the other floors. The guide to the museum of 1887 explained how this idea would work out in practice. In addition to four basic groupings - mineralogical, botanical, zoological and geological there was a fifth 'intended to be an introduction to all the others'. (6) Following on from this all the collections of the museum were arranged in three distinct series. The first two, as the guide explained, were concerned with the diffusion of knowledge, and the two latter with the advancement of knowledge.

The first was

'An Elementary or Introductory Series by which the study of every group should commence, in which the leading features of the structure, and, as far as may be, the development of the various parts of

some of its most typical members, are demonstrated in a clear and simple manner, and the terms used in describing and defining them explained by means of illustrative examples'.

The second was

'The Exhibited Systematic Series, in which the most important types of animal, plant or mineral forms are shown, by means of carefully selected and well-preserved specimens, arranged in a systematic manner, or one which exhibits as far as maybe, their natural relations to each other. Classification is an important feature in this series, which should be so complete and so arranged as to ensure that every visitor to the Museum can find, without recourse to assistance from officials, every well-known and very distinct form of animal, plant or mineral, and satisfy himself about, at least, its external characters'. (7)

The third class was the Reserve or Study Systematic Series, a reserve collection which was 'visited by comparatively few persons' and which, from a scientific point of view; was 'the most important part of the Museum, for by their means new knowledge is obtained'.

It contained

'all those exceedingly numerous specimens (in many groups, the great bulk of the collection in fact) showing the minute distinctions which are required for working out problems of variations according to age, sex, season and locality, for fixing the limits of geographical distribution, or determining the range in geological time: distinctions which, in most cases, can only be appreciated when specimens exhibiting them are kept under such conditions as to admit ready and close examination and comparison...' (8)

There was an intimate connection between the Natural History Museum in London and the Museum of Science and Arts in Chambers Street in Edinburgh, the directorship for which Geddes had applied unsuccessfully in 1903 to develop an Index Museum. Richard Owen had himself been a student at the University of Edinburgh in the 1820's and he was to make a special visit to the then newly opened Science and Art Museum in Edinburgh in March 1865. The Edinburgh museum had been designed by an army engineer, a certain Captain Fowkes, who was to win the competition in May 1864 for a design for the South Kensington Museum. His untimely death the following year meant that design of the London museum passed into the hands of Alfred Waterhouse who was

appointed to carry out the design of Fowkes and who similarly followed Owen to inspect Fowkes' original design in Edinburgh.

The notion of the type series developed by Huxley and the transmogrification of that concept into the index museum cannot be underestimated in its influence on Patrick Geddes' educational ideas, his theory of knowledge and the many actions and social reforms that Geddes became involved in throughout his life. It has been little commented upon in the literature on Geddes and it overlooks a key insight into his intellectual development.

### **Popularisation of Knowledge**

Throughout his life Geddes was an active participant and innovator in the movement to extend the opportunities for the great majority of excluded citizenry to avail themselves of university level education. From the start Geddes was secretary of the University Extension Board at the University of St. Andrews. 'In any account of the steps to organise the movement in Scotland', William A. Knight, Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of St. Andrews wrote in the inaugural prospectus, ...

'special mention must be made of Patrick Geddes, to whose zeal and energy the formation of a large Provisional Committee of University Professors and others favourable to the movement is entirely due. He has advocated the scheme, and laboured at it with unwearied patience and disinterested ardour'.  
(9)

The greatest flowering of the University extension movement in Scotland was even more Patrick Geddes's singular effort and initiative: this was his Summer School of Arts and Sciences first organised in 1887. 'No matter what Professor Geddes' services may have been in the early days of the Scottish Extension Movement', concluded R. M. Wenley in a post mortem on the movement from his Chair of Philosophy at the University of Michigan whence he had moved from an earlier post in Glasgow, 'there can be little doubt that his greatest achievement ... is his inception and entirely successful conduct, during the past eight years, of a "Summer School of Art and Science", which consists of "Vacation Courses" delivered annually, in August, at Edinburgh'. (10)

Taking the University Summer Gathering at Chautauqua (U.S.A.) and the Summer Gathering at Oxford as model and suggestion Geddes' Edinburgh School was a unique educational experience which carried his own inimitable stamp, all 'the more remarkable', as

Wenley observed, 'that it has been attained entirely without official assistance either from the University of Edinburgh or from any sister seats of learning?' (11)

The Edinburgh Summer School was residential, delegates from outside of the city having the opportunity of staying in one of the several student residences Patrick Geddes had developed in the Lawnmarket and the Ramsay Gardens. At its height in the mid-nineties the Summer School had become a substantial educational endeavour: in 1893 there were nine scientific courses and six in arts. The subject areas ranged from philosophy and ethics through biology and sociology to hygiene, literature and history. Associated activities included excursions within city and region; dramatic literary and musical recitals, art classes and even a course in Sloyd woodwork! The lecturers were distinguished and came from Europe and North America. They included William James from Harvard; Charles Zueblin from Chicago; Stanley Hall, President of Clark University in Worcester Massachusetts; Professors Wenley of Michigan and Mayor of Toronto; Haeckel of Jena and Grosse of Freiburg; Professors A.C. Haddon and W.K. Ingram of Dublin; Principal Lloyd Morgan of Bristol.



From France there were Professor Espinas of Bordeaux; Professors Delage and Manoeuvrier of Paris and the Director of the Paris Museum of Natural History, Dr. H. de Varigny, and there were many lecturers from Edinburgh itself.

It will be seen that in the international origins of its lecturers and its residential nature the Summer School had become something quite qualitatively different from the University Extension movement. The students attending were generally students from the University, school teachers or people who generally had some form of higher education, and were thus of quite a different social catchment and experience to those students who attended the University Extension classes.

However the aims and experiences of the Summer School were soon to appear again in another form in the vastly ambitious international school that Geddes organised at the 1900 Paris Exhibition. Sir Robert Pullar, owner of the dye-works at Perth and an old friend of Patrick Geddes's father, made available a gift of #3,000 to enable Geddes to implement his plan of organising a summer school in Paris. It is quite possible that the outstanding success of the University Extension classes that Geddes had organised in Perth had warmed Pullar and given him confidence in Geddes' abilities.

In the Paris Exhibition of 1900 Geddes' interest and experiments in University Extension and the pedagogic potentialities of exhibitions merge into one astonishing and bold experiment. Here we see manifest that singular endeavour that was the basis of his intellectual life's work: his attempt to forge links between the higher and advanced learning with the popular and publicly accessible. Taking advantage in 1899 of simultaneous meetings of the British and French Associations for the Advancement of Science in Dover and Boulogne, Patrick Geddes gathered together a list of academic luminaries from either side of the Channel to act as guides and supporters of his international assembly, and to which he later added German and Russian groups. An excursion to America where he criss-crossed Universities and museums from Chicago to Boston, from Boston to Washington trawled in an even richer list of supporters of his Paris endeavour from Richard T. Ely to Andrew Carnegie, Jane Addams to Woodrow Wilson, William Dean Howells to John Dewey.

The Paris International Assembly of the International Association for the Advancement of Science, Arts and Education gathered in May 1900 at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. Here was the most stupendous

gathering of artefacts and illustrations of the world of nature and culture that human ingenuity had ever amassed in one place in human history. The British, French, American, Russian and German volunteer academics were to act as guides, interpreters and lecturers to the visiting masses. Here was an index museum to the universe! Here the unity of reality, inaccessible to the specialization and fragmentation of modern academic research would find its matching and sufficiently comprehensive unity of knowledge. Geddes' academic cicerones would make this vast storehouse of knowledge comprehensible to the common visitor as had the Extension lecturers in the south east of Scotland to the citizenry outside the Universities.

Alas for Geddes' toils and efforts it was not to be so: the visitors were not interested in academic lectures. The final statistics were: one hundred lecturers gave 300 formal lectures on the main features of the Exposition, 800 talks on special subjects and some 450 guided visits to various parts of the Fair. Yet Geddes was not to be easily daunted. Despite the failure of the Exposition Summer School (and an overstayed absence from his University duties in Dundee - he was in Paris for over a year - and a miscarriage his wife suffered in Paris) he threw himself into a campaign to turn the Exposition into a lasting museum. His idea was to secure the permanency of each national pavilion.

Needless to say his campaign failed and the subsequent campaign to preserve the contents of the pavilions also.

The day was near, however, when Geddes intended to fight again. At the closing dinner in the U.S.A. pavilion in Paris he announced plans for a reconvening of the International Assembly in the following year, 1901, at the Glasgow Exhibition and in 1903 at St. Louis. The exhibition and the museum were for him the royal road to knowledge both popular and esoteric. The Rue des Nations, he said of the street of pavilions he wanted to preserve as museums in Paris, would become a new 'Sacred Way at Delphi', (13), the new road to knowledge.

Knowledge for Geddes was a taking stock of social evolution. Fourteen years before the Paris 1900 Exhibition the Edinburgh Industrial Exhibition in 1886 had provided him a cause for reflection nearer to home. In his essay on the same subject the next year, Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress, he was to conclude that 'there can be no better standpoint for an intelligent survey of modern progress than that afforded by an international exhibition'. (14) The Paris Exhibition was a fitting summation of the progress of social evolution of the nineteenth century and presented the most complete model of how knowledge of that human progress could be developed.

'Have we not here', Geddes was to write (15) in retrospect, 'the boldest attempt, the richest wealth of suggestion for a true world-museum, at once an encyclopaedic and artistic presentment of man in his place in history, his place in geography his place in nature?'

At the 1901 Glasgow Exhibition the notion of the exhibition as transient museum and inventory of social evolution and progress was advanced again. 'During its course on International Exhibition', Geddes concluded (16) in a published report,

'is naturally considered chiefly as a city's fete, or as a world's fair; and its success is estimated financially, and by its number of visitors. Later, however, its deeper and more intellectual aspect becomes manifest, that of a vast and varied museum, representing many aspects of human activity in its city and country, and in the world around: while towards its close practical questions are increasingly asked. What has been its effect, what are its suggestions, what is its impulse to industrial, scientific, artistic, educational and social activity? What legacy, material as well as financial, may it leave us?'

In the same report he proposed to the City of Glasgow Corporation an unsolicited scheme for rendering the Exhibition permanent as a 'vast and varied museum'.

It was exactly fifty years before that the Great Exhibition of 1851 had been converted into the permanent museum complex of South Kensington. Geddes proposed no less for Glasgow in a grand flourish of folie de grandeur. 'It is to be regretted', he announced,

'that the Exhibitions of Manchester, Edinburgh, Dublin, Liverpool and others outside London have usually left little or no permanent legacy to their cities'.

He noted that the Glasgow Exhibition of 1888 had bequeathed the spacious Kelvingrove Galleries so that Art already had its permanent legacy from an International Exhibition in Glasgow. What remained to propose was no impediment to the ambitiousness of what Geddes thought was possible and desirable, as the list of museums he put forward indicate:

- Commercial Museum -

'the present possibilities of Glasgow are obvious'.

- Technical Museums

a) Shipbuilding -

'How easily the present collection of ship models might be extended into a unique "Museum of the Ship" ... fully commemorative of the supremacy of Glasgow throughout the last century, but helpful in the education of the whole community in its increasing struggle to retain this supremacy through the opening one'.

b) Engineering -

'This can be more easily and naturally made in Glasgow than anywhere in the world'.

c) Electricity -

'As science advances, as its appliances evolve, there is ever increasing need to record and to preserve the steps of that progress; and this not only for the sake of the general intelligence; but for the ordinary worker, the ordinary student ... and also for the investigator'.

- Agriculture, Forestry etc -

'Agriculture is our largest Scottish industry, and forestry claims to become one of the largest industries of the future'.

- Museum of Hygiene -

'to provide for ... the thorough education of the public ... the prevention of tuberculosis ... and a popularisation of hygiene ...'.

- Regional Museum (Glasgow and the Clyde Basin) -

'the monograph of Glasgow and the Clyde Basin, published as the British Associations' Handbook ... now requires its corresponding concrete collections of objects and illustrations, etc - its Museum, in short ...'.

- Civic Museums (Comparative Civics) -

'To understand our own city, we must compare it with others'.

- History of International Exhibitions -

'a centre of reference for planning future Exhibitions'.



- Museum of Scottish History and Archaeology -

'The public are peculiarly ready for and appreciative of the interpretation of the national past'.

- Museum of Geography -

'Even if no special Geographical Museum be at present practicable, the due presentment of geographical considerations underlies the arrangement of many others, and notably of a Commercial Museum, a Regional and Civic Museum, an Historical Museum and so on'..

- Museum of Social Economy -

'no series of museums can be complete until Social Economy is represented'.

- Peace Museum - must

'await utilisation with the preceding'.

- Museum of Comparative Education -

'in which would be accessible to all branches of the teaching profession and to the press and public at large, the fullest and most recent intelligence as to educational methods and progress in all parts of the civilised world'.

- Collections of Bibliography -

'That all the above Museums and Institutes should be equipped with their now-a-days indispensable special Bibliographies'.

The outcome of the International Assembly at the 1901 Glasgow Exhibition was financially disastrous for Geddes and involved him in several years of frustrating litigation. It was to be the end of his International Assembly and his fantastic ambitions for International Exhibitions. In his Pittencrief Park Plan in 1904 he was to put forward one more of his vast bloated scheme for museums but after the Glasgow Exhibition his subsequent interest and work with exhibitions was to be at the much more manageable and modest level of his civics and town planning exhibitions. For this reason he was able to achieve much more success and impact.

## Specialisation of Knowledge

Specialisation, Geddes was frequently to say, was knowing more and more about less and less. He saw specialisation as the root obstacle to educational reform and progress: 'modern investigators are but Crusoes', isolated, he was to write, on their 'innumerable islands of concrete specialism'. The aim of the Summer Meetings was

'to bring together specialists of various kinds who should, however, be in sympathy with each other, with a general aim toward order and synthesis of knowledge ... through all the courses there runs an attempt at increasing unity and order ... the aim is to weave the threads of many, studies, to generalise, rather than to specialise'. (17)

Reference has often been made to the Geddesian concept of synthesis and its corollary, the need to pass beyond specialisation. Such commentaries have generally been about the commonplace and orthodox notion that at a certain level town planning is about the combination of a range of interests and skills to produce a synthesis. Such a reading, however, perpetrates a severe reductionism on the Geddesian notion of specialism and synthesis. For rather than a low level empirical generalisation Geddes's

conception of specialisation is squarely in the higher and grander tradition of theorising and history of the Scottish University as identified by George Elder Davie in The Democratic Intellect. (18)

The generally educated Scot was an old ideal to which Geddes firmly subscribed and which he was committed to renewing and revivifying.

'The Scots', Davie writes,

'had an almost religious attachment to their inherited ideal of a culture in which the general should take precedence over the particular and the whole over the parts'. (19)

Davie argues that through successive waves of catastrophe and renaissance a struggle was bitterly waged to save the soul of the Scottish University tradition which maintained the primacy of a general education chiefly underpinned by a prominent role given to philosophy. Successive assaults of Anglicization eventually saw the triumph of specialisation in 1889 which made Scottish higher education 'at last reorganised in accordance with English ideals'. (20)

Geddes was to give evidence to the Universities Commission of 1889 and he saw specialisation as an inevitable concomitant of the modern division of labour. However he did not accept it as a final resting point:

'We hear much in these days of sorely-needed academic reform, of abandoning our old curriculum of education based on the idea of general knowledge, and settling down to specialisms. And so far so well: our old culture has broken down, is totally inadequate, and through this phase of keen and detailed specialism we must pass; we must not only know something about everything, but also everything about something. But what I have been trying to show is that while henceforth every man should pass through the training of a specialist, no man need shrivel into a specialist pure and simple - a mere slave of the intellectual division of labour'.

He concluded:

'We have not to learn dogmas, but to seize the clues and share the experience of past thinkers - to remember, in fact (what I take to be the secret of education), that the gift of Prometheus was not a dead-weight of coals, but fire'. (21)

After the Disruption, Davie argued, 'education became the chief forum of resistance to Southern encroachment'. (22) Geddes, although he had forsaken Scottish Universities and had taken up his undergraduate studies in England, was sensitively aware that the Scottish University tradition was an important part of Scottish identity. It is significant that he took the Professor of Greek at the University of Edinburgh, John Stuart Blackie, as hero and ideal-type for a Scottish Renaissance, in an essay of that name in The Evergreen. Blackie had been educated in German Universities, which Geddes took to be the source of specialisation, but he was simultaneously both defender and critic of the Scottish Universities.

Geddes was not an uncritical adherent of what R.D. Anderson has called (23) the myth of Scottish education. At a final lecture at the end of the academic year at University College, Dundee, in 1889, the year of the Universities Commission, he told his audience frankly: 'I am going to say some unpleasant truths, such as people rarely hear'. He was not, he went on, 'a candidate for political honours from the other side of the Tweed' who would

'repeat the usual cheap flatteries about our being the best educated and the most advanced people in the world ... and then ... go home to London or Oxford laughing in my sleeve'. (24)

He was sufficiently enough a patriot to feel, as Davie has said elsewhere, that 'the adoption of the usages of the Southron would negate the long, independent, effort of Scottish history', (25) and that what was being decided about Scottish Universities 'was no less than the distinctive sort of society developed by the Scots'. Geddes concluded:

'I claim to be no less enthusiastic a Scotsman than any here, and with that patriotism too, which a man never feels so fully as when he has lived a thousand miles from home, but which does not shrink from honestly comparing the strong and weak sides of one's own people with others ... we are divided between two exaggerations - one, that of a legendary superiority in almost every conceivable respect to almost all conceivable people; the other of excessive self-depreciation, as if we had no nationality worth the name'. (26)

The Scottish University, Davie was to say, was 'semi-continental', and in this Geddes was squarely in the tradition that Davie identified. Geddes found the Franco-Scottish Society in Edinburgh and made strenuous efforts, without success, to resuscitate the old Scots College in Paris. At the end of his life he founded the College des Ecossais in Montpellier with his own funds.

Other than predilection and loyalty to the major Scottish University tradition, Geddes had a further and ontological objection to specialisation. As a biologist he considered that specialisation perpetrates an empirical reductionism on the object under observation. It severed, in other words, the organism from the environment (or vice versa). 'Biology', he averred, 'should not be a description of a dead plant or animal, but of the living and growing organism'. (27) Elsewhere he wrote that biology before Darwin had become 'a cachetical analysis of dead forms', whereas for Darwin himself:

'Plants and animals ... are not merely isolated phenomena, but are intimately and closely related to themselves and to others of their kind, and also to the earth itself'. (28)

In the study of Biology, as in the study of anything Geddes believed we are similarly involved in the study of the 'ever-varying Proteus of Life'. (29)

This basic ontological objection to specialisation was the determining premise of Geddes's substantial and comprehensive pedagogy: part of an educational revolution he was to say, 'which some define as from static to kinetic, others from analytic to synthetic, others from formal to vital'. (30) 'The last generation', he explained:



'was educated indoors, education (now), is being carried out more and more out of doors'.

In simplest terms his pedagogy was called Nature-study which:

'begins with the child's awakening to the beauty of the country, to an interest in its life and change, its common things, its everyday sights and sounds...?'

but this was generalisable and applied to all learning and all knowledge:

'It is the habit of observing and thinking for one's self, and at one's best, without books or helps, in presence of facts and in the open air'.  
(31)

Just as Geddes saw no fundamental difference in the educational approach to the unschooled attender of University Extension classes and the University student, so he saw no difference, except in maturity, of the learning of the child and the learning of the adult. 'Between the simple universe of the child-geographer', he stated boldly in the prospectus for the 1890 Summer School, 'and the encyclopaedic Survey of Aristotle there is no difference'.

This was because he saw the foundation of all education residing in wonderment: the beauty of Nature was to be enjoyed before analysis of it was begun:

'... it can hardly be too strongly insisted that nature teaching begins neither through knowledge or discipline, but through delight ... Too many adults are thus not developed children, but defective, stunted or degenerate ones; and it is not too much to say that much of so-called "education" of the past is literally definable as the production of artificial defectives. (32)

The repressive nature of Scottish education and Sabbatarianism, and the increasing bureaucratisation and standardisation of schooling after the 1872 Education Act was the continuous occasion for denunciation and dissent whenever learning was mentioned in Geddes's hearing. He often spoke of his joy and relief as a child, after the repressive day-long gloom of Sunday spent all day at the Kirk, to return to the family cottage on Kinnoull Hill in Perth and take a leisurely conducted tour of the garden with his father. This childhood experience was always a shining educational model to him throughout his adult life:

'I had been an eager field-naturalist from childhood, botanist and gardener too, mineralogist and rock-work builder; and at school had naturally revolted from its conventional classics, and taken to the modern side. Hence purpose towards science, though in what specific line I could not clearly say, amid its many and varied attractions. During schooldays my wise father had given me a museum shanty, and next built me an outhouse laboratory and workshop. Then on leaving school, as I could not yet define my college ambitions, he encouraged me to various trials as of chemistry ... of mineralogy and botany, with a little geology, too, and of the rudiments of zoology and physiology. The whole, too, with the summers free for varied roaming and voracious reading, by turns and together; to which he added also a brief but salutary and steadying experience of office and of workshop as well as a period at the art school; and all this fundamentally upon his theory of self-education, though with reference and help on various sides as needed - a method I had enthusiastically adopted, and hold by still. Hence I felt happier than my old school fellows, by this time fully in the regular university or other mill; and I still feel fortunate in having been given these adolescent years, in freedom from all routine fixity and examination pressure, and with, studies pursued for their interest alone. (33)

Geddes very much practised what he preached in the education of his own three children. Although the unsettledness of Geddes' parapetetic academic life, and his frequent resort to roping in his family as convenient unpaid labour on many of his ventures, were often the real reasons for the unorthodox and uninstitutional education of his children, the ideals were there. Arthur, the youngest child could write (34) to him of his timetable for every morning at the age of twelve:

Learn Poetry	7.30 to 45
Singing	45 to 8.00
Violin	8.00 to 8.30
Brownies Breaks 1,	8.30 to 9.00
Writing and Reading	9.00 to 10.30
Lunch	10.30 to 10.45
Violin	10.45 to 11.15
Preparation	11.15 to 11.45
Wood Carving	11.45 to 12.30

Although a subsequent student and then professional colleague of Arthur's at the University of Edinburgh later wrote of him that as a geographer 'he was led into endless related, if perhaps marginal, speculations' and that 'Had he been subject to a more normal school and University education, he might have been better able to focus his attention on one theme', (35) the Geddes' children's upbringing certainly

indicated a sturdy independence. At the age of thirteen, for example, Arthur dashed off a postcard to his brother:

'I too have had a jolly weekend in Fife alone. Took a steamer on Saturday arriving 11.50 a.m. Then walked about sketching a little, slept the night in cowshed - (heaps of straw!) and then walked up Largs Law from which you could see the Tay and the Forth at the same time, the Sidlaws and the Pentlands, Lomonds and some of the hills of Perthshire. Splendid! Slept next night in wood behind Beveridge Park, Kirkcaldy ...' (35)

Alisdair, in his own right, gives quixotically Geddesian illustration of the unselfconscious naturalness of an unforced education when he remarks (36), in a letter to his mother, that from the dangerous exposure of his balloon of the Observation Corps at the Front his principal occupation is thinking of Geographical Survey and how to establish the place-work-folk demarcations on the ground below!

The virulence of Geddes' advocacy of the need to escape from the classroom into the open-air was a reaction to the asphyxiation of education in both school and university by the tightening grip of a bureaucratic examination system. All his life he

refused to take exams, except on one occasion at the School of Mines where he took an exam for a wager that he could swot it up all the night before, and won. The present system, he asserted, in his inaugural lecture at Dundee was

'a crushing and unintelligible burden of cram, the Juggernaut which is at present probably ruining more minds than did ever human misarrangement in this world before'. (37)

The principal determinant of the 'dead incubus of cram' was so that students could be 'doubly fatted for prize winning in the coarse scales of the examination room'. (38) Geddes' challenge to educationalists was how to educate children

'avoiding as we must that formulating, codifying, freezing, fossilizing process'. (39)

A major practical proposal Geddes strenuously advocates as a solution to the prisonhouse and mill that so many schools had become was in the development of children's gardens. That 'paltry little railed and concreted "playground"' that had been developed as part of many state-aided schools, was really something else: 'call it rather prison-yard, shoving yard, Hooliganeum'. (40)

It was because of this 'deadening, starving and stunting' (41) that educators should sympathetically interpret the psychology of truancy', in terms of 'hunger of nature experience' and 'instinct for travel'. (42) Robert Louis Stevenson was such a truant Geddes claimed and 'Darwin, of course, is arch-truant of all'.

Geddes was a trenchant critic of the neatly-flowered borders of so many municipal parks and an energetic campaigner for the development of children's gardens. What children needed in public open spaces was not pretty herbaceous borders he was often to say, but old logs with which to make wigwams and stones with which to dam streams. Passive learning was the old rote and drill of confinement in the classroom: outside, education was to be active and participatory.

Abbotsholme School in Derbyshire was the principal legacy of the Geddesian educational philosophy. It was a substantial achievement and influence to merit Geddes a secure enough place in that line of great Scottish educational reformers and radicals that leads to A.S. Neill but astonishingly it is little commented upon in the general biographical literature on Geddes.

Abbotsholme spawned other independent institutional offspring in France, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium and eventually in North America. It was the pioneer of what became known as the New Schools in Europe, and initiated a period of educational innovation that was to last till the First World War. By a circuitous route it returned to Scotland with Kurt Hahn who founded Gordonstoun, and who was first put on the road to his own educational ideas through the influence of Abbotsholme in Germany in the 1920's. (43)

Cecil Reddie had been a pupil at Fettes before going on to Edinburgh University where he came under the influence of Geddes in whose laboratory he was a demonstrator in 1884-5. It was at a Summer School in Edinburgh in 1894 that Reddie met Edmond Demolins, the continuator of the Le Play Philosophy in Paris through the journal La Science Sociale, and who was to found the Ecole des Roches on Reddie lines in Normandy, and which continues today. Reddie pioneered the Geddesian gospel of the outdoors at Abbotsholme - the Gospel of potato-digging as the Pall Mall Gazette called it - as part of the school curriculum. (44) The importance of what Reddie called manual training can be seen in the school timetable, reminiscent of Arthur Geddes' private study regimen above:



Morning.

6.10 A.M. Rise (in winter at 7)  
6.30 " Drill  
6.45 " First School  
7.30 " Chapel  
7.40 " Breakfast  
8.30 " Second School  
10.15 " Break for Lunch  
10.30 " Third School  
12.15 P.M. Bathing

Afternoon.

1.0 P.M. Dinner  
1.30 " Organ or Piano Recital  
2.0 " (Games, Gardening, Workshops, &c.)  
6.0 " Tea  
6.30 " Singing, Recitations, Music, &c.  
8.30 " Supper and Chapel  
9.0 " Lights out.

Geddes remained on the Advisory Council of Abbotsholme for 25 years and in 1904 made a major inspection and report on the school at Reddies' request.

The Geddesian theory of the educational and recreational potential of gardens and parks is best seen in his Dunfermline Study whilst the practice is best exemplified in the children's gardens created in the Old Town of Edinburgh. At Dunfermline Geddes indulged in every possible design and botanical opportunity from a Pinetum to bog garden, wild garden, formal garden, rock garden, fern garden, history garden, craft garden, iris pond, zoo, conservatory and the appropriate Nature Palace and Museum alongside to develop formal understanding and learning. He proposed a children's garden, with seventy-five small plots to be cultivated by individual children and, of course, plant distribution and indexing had to have a didactic purpose: (45)

'I would combine at once an order of planting expressive of the present standpoint of the systematic and of the evolutionary biologist, so that we should literally ascend the tree of life. ... A literal bird's-eye view of the vegetable kingdom would thus set forth, with perhaps unprecedented simplicity and clearness - this Tree of Evolution, fitly completing and indexing that general presentment of the main orders of the vegetable kingdom which is disposed throughout the park ...'.

The Pittencrief Park plan was never implemented but a number of small children's gardens were developed in Edinburgh's Old Town by the Outlook Tower Association's Open Spaces Committee. These gardens were developed on small pockets of derelict land in the highly overcrowded slums of tenement housing and were staffed by volunteer ladies. Some endure today and they perfectly illustrate Geddes' piecemeal renewal of urban areas and his conception of the educational and recreational role of gardens for children. They are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The most general approach to teaching and learning was in the stress that Geddes put on what he called eye-education as opposed to ear-education. He often said of himself that he was a visuel not an auditif. Delight and wonder in the world of nature - an unfolding drama he would call it in a Bergsonian mood - fostered by an education out of doors:

'To note, and map, and make the most of the characteristic excursions of our neighbourhood, park and garden and roadside; to the meadow and wood and moor, the hill and dell and seashore ...'.

(46)

These led to the 'child's awakening to the beauty of the country'. (47)

Appreciation of the beauty of the natural world led to the appreciation of art:

'The correlation of nature and art may be craved for. The apprehension of the respective beauties best seized by photograph and by painting the appreciation of their respective qualities of tone and colour, will soon give him (the pupil) an interest in handling the camera and the pencil for himself, a greater desire to add colour to his sketch. Here then is a strategic point on the warfare against modern ugliness ... With this fundamental craving for beauty all the senses are at work!. (48)

In a lecture to the tenth Summer School in 1896 Geddes divided humanity into two great groups: the Eye-minded and the Ear-minded. He felt that in Northern Europe and Protestant Countries eye-education had been starved and he wished to restore the balance. In a telling private moment, a letter to his wife, his response to the beauty of the Highland countryside through which he rode in a gig to the funeral of Mary Hill Burton, is a powerful demonstration of his passionate commitment to the education of the eye:

'I felt the necessity of seeing as a mainjoy for every life and that, if one but could "teach" i.e. perhaps not even "awake" or "develop" but simply preserve from destruction the child's artistic sense, the whole of life would be relieved at every moment, and its great moments rise to extasies ...' (51)

The stress on the visual should not be underestimated in Geddes' theory of education and, indeed, his theory of knowledge. The impulse to beauty for him was a Ruskinian road to moral virtue, from which personal uplift and social reform derived. From his early work with the Edinburgh Social Union from providing flower boxes in the windows of slums, whitewashing tenement stairs to formal art classes, his commitment to the transcendence of personal and social immiseration and entrapment was apparent. This could, of course, be so much middle class cant and hypocrisy but Geddes' lasting achievements in commissioning and inducing mural decoration, arts and crafts; painting and sculpture; architectural conservation and restoration and the creation of children's gardens in Edinburgh's Old Town in its quality and comprehensiveness is sufficient testimony to his seriousness of purpose and social responsibility.

There is a final aspect of the visual in the Geddesian system knowledge. This is his advocacy of graphical presentation. He made the most ambitious and outlandish claims for this, though in the post-television and advertising age they probably seem less excessive:

'I find it difficult to imagine any class of ideas which does not appear to my mind to lend itself more vividly to graphic than to verbal presentment. I would even claim that this graphic method can be applied to psychology, even to philosophy itself'.  
(52)

In the form of his so called thinking machine it has often perplexed his interpreters, many of whom have found him eccentric and even risible. It is true that his thinking machines and other graphical forms are zany and often ludicrous but seen in the general context of his conception of the visual they are less offensively unintelligible.

### **Classification**

The burgeoning of scientific production and the increasing specialisation of knowledge Geddes told his Dundee students at his inaugural lecture, 'introduces us to new masses of botanical literature, which threatens to smother us'. (53) In that home of

specialisation, Germany, a young investigator - 'where nowadays they manufacture them wholesale' - would in enlist in some school

' ... and work there all one's life as in a mill, often half unconscious, or three-parts indifferent to all the work going on around - a scientific millworker, in short'. (54)

The answer to the growth of scientific knowledge and its specialisation lay in the classification of knowledge.

Geddes' concern with classification - 'a bunch of magic keys to the glorious museum of nature' (55) - is most centrally developed in his conception of the 'type' or 'index' system. At Dundee, for example, he recommended to his students a type-library that he devised for them which consisted of a simple classification of the literature arranged historically in a basic biological classification of physiology (or function) and morphology (or form). The use of this 'simple historic classification' was that 'it enables us to dive into the literature of any branch of the subject at will'. There is a familiar Geddesian polemic behind his scheme. The classificatory



revolution initiated by Linnaeus, 'that concerned with describing and cataloguing the forms of nature', was reduced, by 'old world pedants' to the 'dead rules of grammar'. 'Enthusiasm of living nature' became 'a mere Latin clerkship'. (57)

Another form of the 'type' system Geddes often advocated was the Type Botanic Garden, as in the case of the one he developed for the Grange House School, shortly after he took up permanent residence in Edinburgh. In the small plot of 100 feet by 40 feet, which he found 'in everyway suitable for a useful exhibition of the natural orders', he felt able in the planting of his seed beds that he could exhibit 'at the glance the general relationships and divisions of the vegetable kingdom'. Such an easily assimilated and simple classification could then become the index to much more complex systems, thus forming

'a most useful key to the greater botanic gardens, where a beginner is lost in the maze of the numerous beds, and where he too often utterly fails to attain any general scientific conception of the plant world'. (58)

The greatest ingenuity and expenditure of energy by Geddes on the classification of knowledge was in his idea of the index museum, his version of which he came to call Outlook Towers.

## The Idea of the Index Museum

More than an ordinary museum, Geddes would explain, his Index Museum was an Encyclopaedia Graphica:

'an Encyclopaedia of which the articles may be imagined printed separately, and with their illustrations and maps condensed and displayed as an orderly series of labels; labels to which specimens are then as far as possible supplied; so that over and above the description, the image, the interpretation of the thing, you can see the thing itself in reality'. (59)

Unlike the Encyclopaedia, which is set out in alphabetical order the Encyclopaedia Graphica has to be set out according to a rational plan that is 'in conformity with reason, and with observation, with philosophy and with the order of nature'. (60) The Index Museum was thus also an Encyclopaedia Methodorica.

The familiar themes come together in a unified conception - at least of Geddes' intentions and aims, if not then realization. There is the primacy of the visual and the necessity of graphical presentation as an implication. Even philosophy can be rendered

comprehensible by graphic methods. There is the need to overcome specialisation and 'the master key itself is the classification of the sciences and the arts'.  
(61):

'the curator is thus a philosopher in the concrete mood, and the philosopher but a curator in the abstract one'.

Finally, to seize and abstract the logical essentials, 'it is the task of science to see and seize the type'.  
(62)

Here Geddes introduces an extension of the notion of the Index Museum as a guide to its own collections. It is possible that the Index Museum could be a guide, an index, to other museums and collections. By concentrating on the essentials the type-collection, although inferior in resources to the collections of the great centres, could prove superior in presenting the unity of knowledge:

'Were a provincial college or city once provided with any one Index Museum such as this, it would be in this respect provincial no longer. It would on the contrary be possessed of a museum literally metropolitan to the metropolis itself - that is a museum which it would be for the metropolitan

institution to reproduce at the very centre of its organisation, and this alike for the sake of its officials, its students and its public'. (63)

The Victorian and Albert Museum at South Kensington was 'too much a vast bazaar of bric-a-brac' because it lacked its 'needful Index Museum'. (64) Such a development would assist the decentralisation of culture since

'the reproduction of the essentials of each of these Index Halls - with simplifications no doubt, but also with detailed improvements has come practically within the range and reach of a provincial museum'.

Thus

'Our provincial museum, stands upon our philosophic classification of the arts and sciences, as does a cathedral or a basilica upon its symbolic plan'. (65)

At the Paris Exposition in 1900 Geddes had set up an Index Museum and Outlook Tower in the Trocadero. It was both a guide to the 350 acres of exhibits and a framework for the classification of knowledge. In

his experiments in Edinburgh it was in the Outlook Tower, with its 'richer synthesis' that he sought to build up a gigantic picture of the world'. (66)

## Footnotes

- (1) Edward McGegan: Notes on Patrick Geddes as a Man of Action, unpublished T.S., Sir Frank Mears and Partners, Edinburgh - A copy now deposited with the National Library of Scotland.
- (2) 'Huxley as a Teacher', by P. Geddes in Supplement to 'Nature', May 9th, 1925.
- (3) op.cit. p. 712.
- (4)
- (5) Survey of London, Vol. XXXVII, p. 201.
- (6) A General Guide to the British Museum (Natural History), p. 17.
- (7) op.cit.
- (8) op.cit.
- (9) W.A. Knight, Scheme for the Extension of University Teaching, St. Andrews University, 1888, p. 11.
- (10) R.M. Wenley, University Extension Movement in Scotland, 1895, p. 37.
- (11) op.cit.
- (12) P. Boardman: The Worlds of Patrick Geddes, London, 1978, p. 184.
- (13) ibid. p. 187.
- (14) P. Geddes, Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress, Edinburgh, David Douglas, 1887.
- (15) P. Geddes: 'Man and Environment: A Study from the Paris Exposition', International Monthly 'II', August 1900, p. 177.
- (16) Report on Museums and Institutes possible after the Close of Glasgow Exhibition of 1901, p. 3.
- (17) P. Geddes: 'Contemporary Social Evolution', in The Interpreter, 4th August 1896, p. 1.

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- (20) ibid. p. 7.
- (21) P. Geddes, 'The Rise and Aims of Modern Botany'.
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- (28) P. Geddes: The Interpreter, 14th August 1896.
- (29) ibid.
- (30) P. Geddes, 'The Facilities for Nature Study', Report of Nature Study Exhibition, London 1902, p. III.
- (31) ibid. p. 114.
- (32) P. Geddes, 'Nature Study and Geographical Education', Scottish Geographical Magazine, October 1902, p. 529.
- (33) Geddes: 'Huxley as Teacher', op.cit. p. 740.
- (34) Arthur Geddes to Norah Geddes, NLS MS 19258.
- (35) Andrew T.A. Learmonth: 'Arthur Geddes 1895-1968' in eds. T.W. Freeman and Philippe Pincheul, Geographers Bibliographical Studies, Vol. 2, Mansell 1978.
- (36) Arthur Geddes to Alisdair Geddes, ibid.



- (36) Alisdair to Anna Geddes, 18th September, 1915, NLS, 19258.
- (37) P. Geddes, The Rise and Aims of Modern Botany, p. 18.
- (38) ibid. p. 116.
- (39) P. Geddes, 'The Facilities for Nature Study', op.cit. p. 115.
- (40) ibid. p. 122.
- (41) ibid. p. 116.
- (42) 'Nature and Geographical Education', op.cit. p. 533.
- (43) W.A.C. Stewart: Progressives and Radicalism English Education 1750-1970, MacMillan, London, 1972, p. 212.
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- (47) ibid. p. 111.
- (48) 'Nature Study and Geographical Education', op.cit. p. 530.
- (49) The Interpreter, 11th August, 1896.
- (50) ibid. 12th August, 1896.
- (51) P. Geddes to Anna Geddes: N.L.S. MS 10508.
- (52) Strathclyde Papers. T. Ged, 5/1/9.
- (53) The Rise and Aims of Modern Botany, p. 10.
- (54) ibid. p. 15.
- (55) ibid. p. 18.
- (56) ibid. p. 12.
- (57) ibid. p. 7.
- (58) P. Geddes, 'A Type Botanic Garden'.
- (59) P. Geddes, Strathclyde Papers, T. Ged, 5/1/9.

- (60) ibid.
- (61) ibid. Chapter VI, p. 3.
- (62) ibid. Chapter VII, p. 1.
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- (64) ibid.
- (65) ibid. p. 3.
- (66) The Interpreter, 11th August, 1896.

## Chapter Four

### The Concept of the Outlook Tower.

'the caird and taister sot humpily - ablow the wee chaumer -, the Chimera Upscrewa in the Ootluik Tower that stanes on the kissekill jist ayant the tap of the Looaun merkit in Alt Raikie in the Cuntie of Dedlethian frae whicshsh he could phew (the auld voyeur) the haiell shitty and onfirens, and throu the moodium of his Obscure Come-here-aa was abull til unjoy in camera a sairtin frigarious pleisure by haeen a bit keek at aa Kenna (and unkenny) ongangings and hochmerandies in ony chaumer, royaume, capinit or closit in oor ain rammantik toun and reeyell burrow whitnever!'

Sydney Goodsir Smith,  
Carotid Carnucopius 1964

I cannot emphasise the point too firmly, that P.G., whether in his personality, or as a thinker, or as a man of action, cannot be properly understood without a clear sympathetic perception of what he meant the Tower to be, and of what the Tower constantly gave to him.

Edward McGegan, Patrick Geddes as a Man of Action

We know the precise point when Geddes took over Short's Observatory, which he renamed the Outlook Tower. James Mavor, subsequently Professor of Political Economy in Toronto, and intellectual friend of Geddes' from Glasgow, relates in his autobiography how he was with Geddes in a moment of leisure on Castlehill when on the spur they decided to pay their coppers and make the ascent of the tower. Finding that the Tower was available for lease Geddes promptly

made an offer which was accepted. (1) For what reason or purpose at the time no-one knew. It has even been suggested that he did not know himself.

The building that Geddes took over in 1892 was originally a seventeenth century tenement at the head of Castlehill in the High Street of Edinburgh's Old Town. In 1834 Maria Theresa Short, only surviving daughter of Thomas Short, optical instrument maker to the University, had erected a public observatory and camera obscura on Calton Hill in a temporary wooden structure. The construction was an eyesore that raised the wrath of Lord Cockburn, but it managed to remain till 1850 when it was finally pulled down by bailiffs on the instruction of the City Fathers. The Town Council looked upon it more as a peep show and place of ill-repute, than an object of serious scientific interest. Four years later in 1854 Maria re-erected her observatory on Castlehill at the head of the High Street of the Old Town. (2)

This was the building that Patrick Geddes took over in 1892. It had two singular characteristics: its location and the optical apparatus on the roof. Bertrand Faure described the location in his Le Professeur Geddes et Son Outlook Tower:-

'Imagine a rectangular building about twenty five to thirty metres high, on a relatively small base, which, as its name suggests, rises in the shape of

Figure 17: Cover of A First Visit to the Outlook Tower,  
1906.

Figure 18: The Outlook Tower.

Source: A First Visit to the Outlook Tower  
1906.

Figure 19: Suggested Plan for a National Institute of  
Geography.

Source: Scottish Geographical Magazine, March  
1902.

Figure 20: A Garden Village Near Edinburgh.

Source: University of Strathclyde Archives.

Figure 21: Roseburn Cliff, Murrayfield.

Source: University of Strathclyde Archives.

Figure 22: Minature of Children's Gardens, High Street,  
Edinburgh.

Source: Edinburgh College of Art.

Figure 23: Plan Showing Open Spaces in The Old Town of  
Edinburgh by Frank Mears.

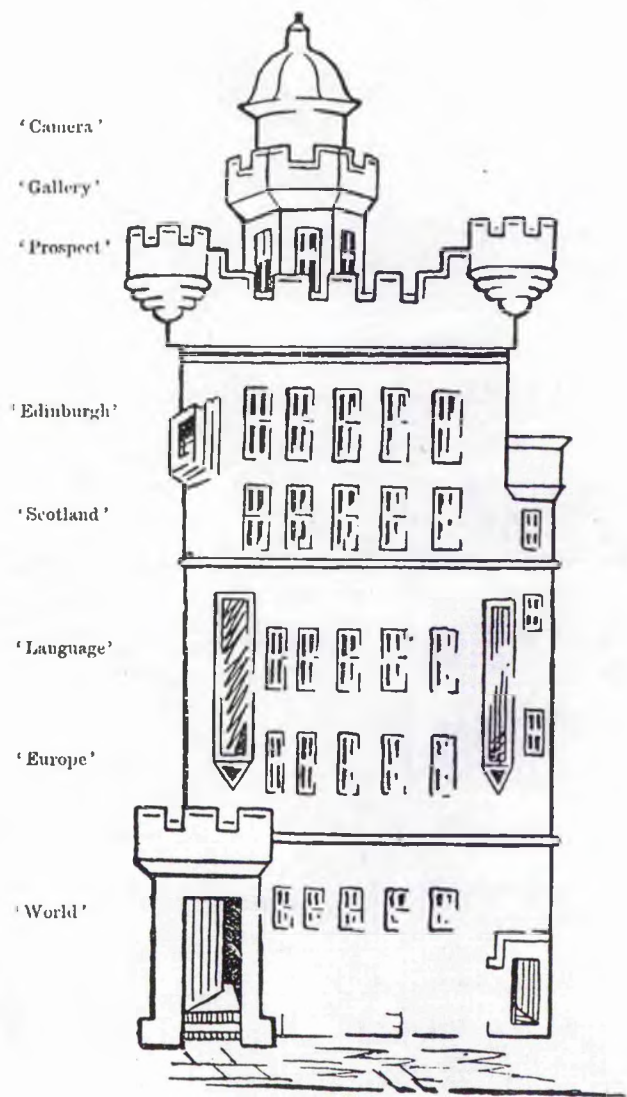
Source: University of Strathclyde Archives.





Figure 17:





THE OUTLOOK TOWER

Figure 18:

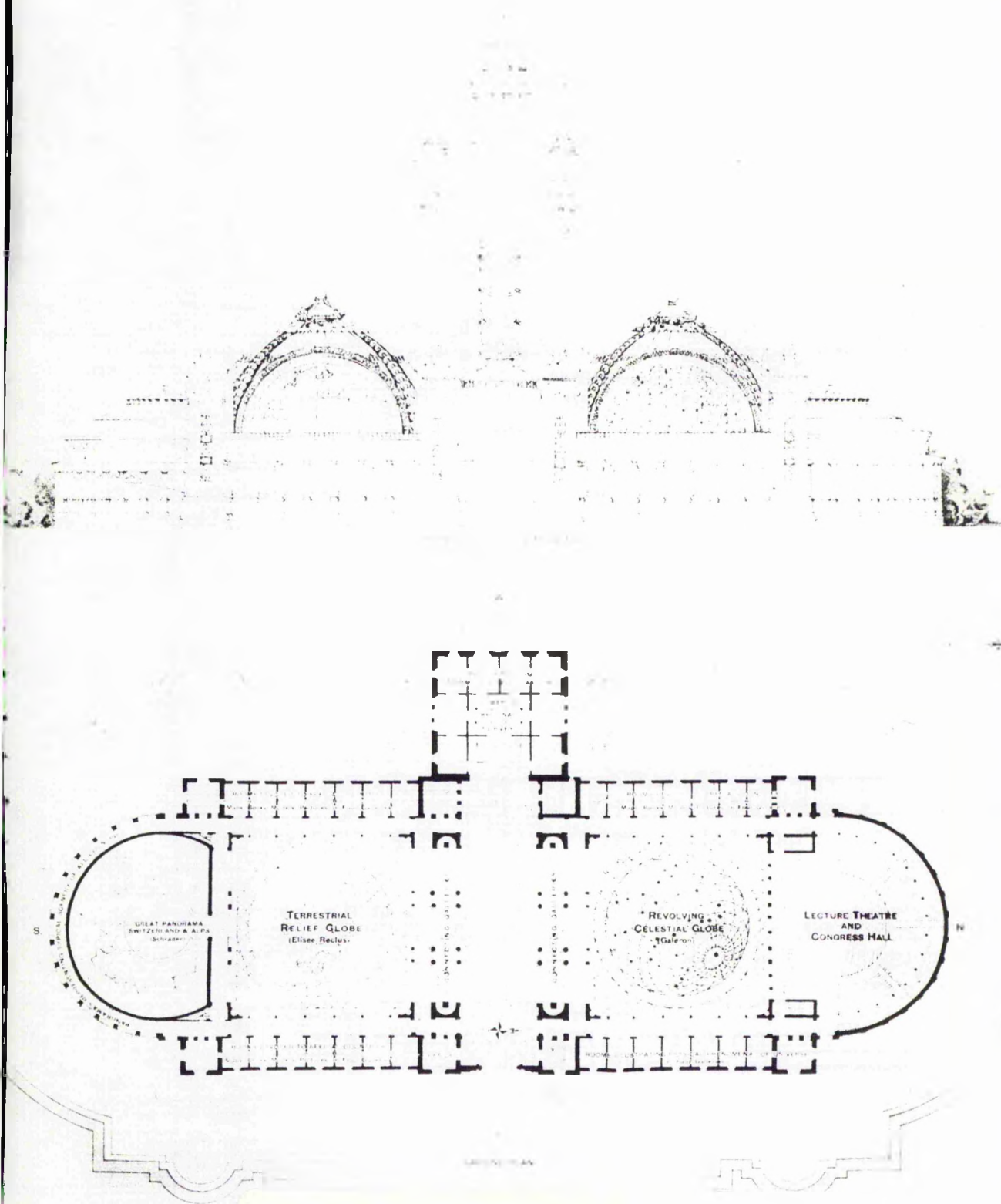


Figure 19:

*Galeon*



# A Garden Village near Murrayfield, Edinburgh

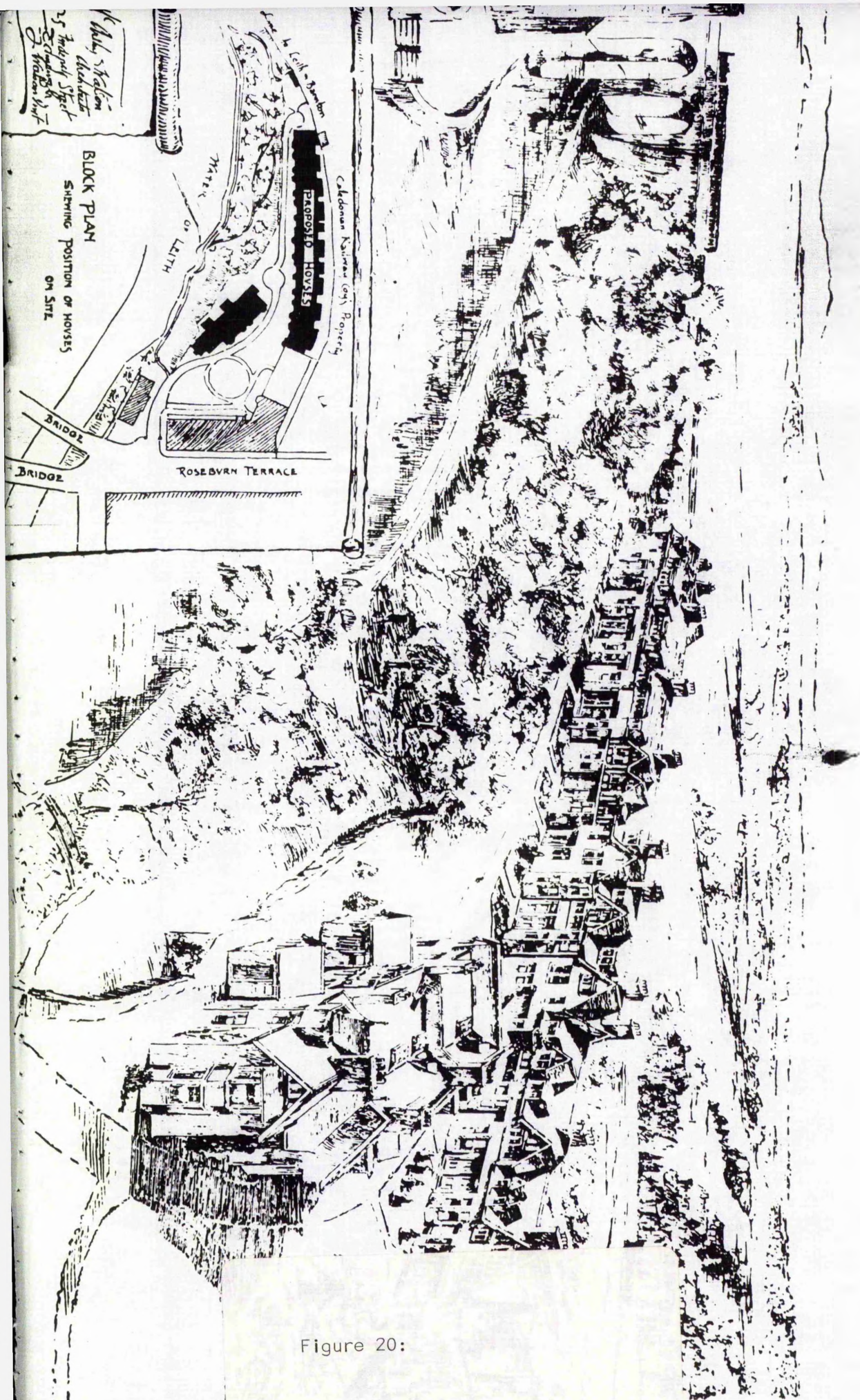


Figure 20:



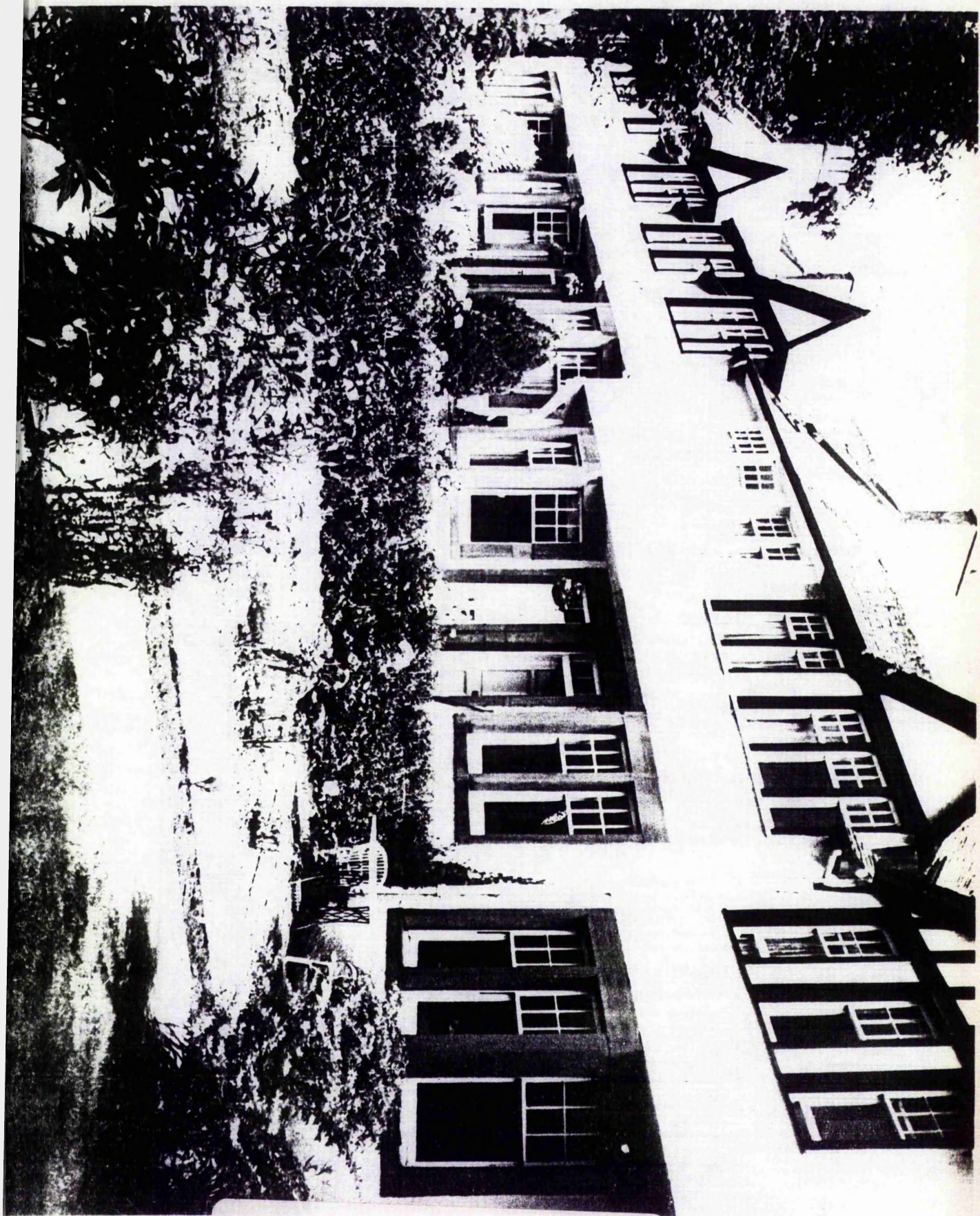


Figure 21:



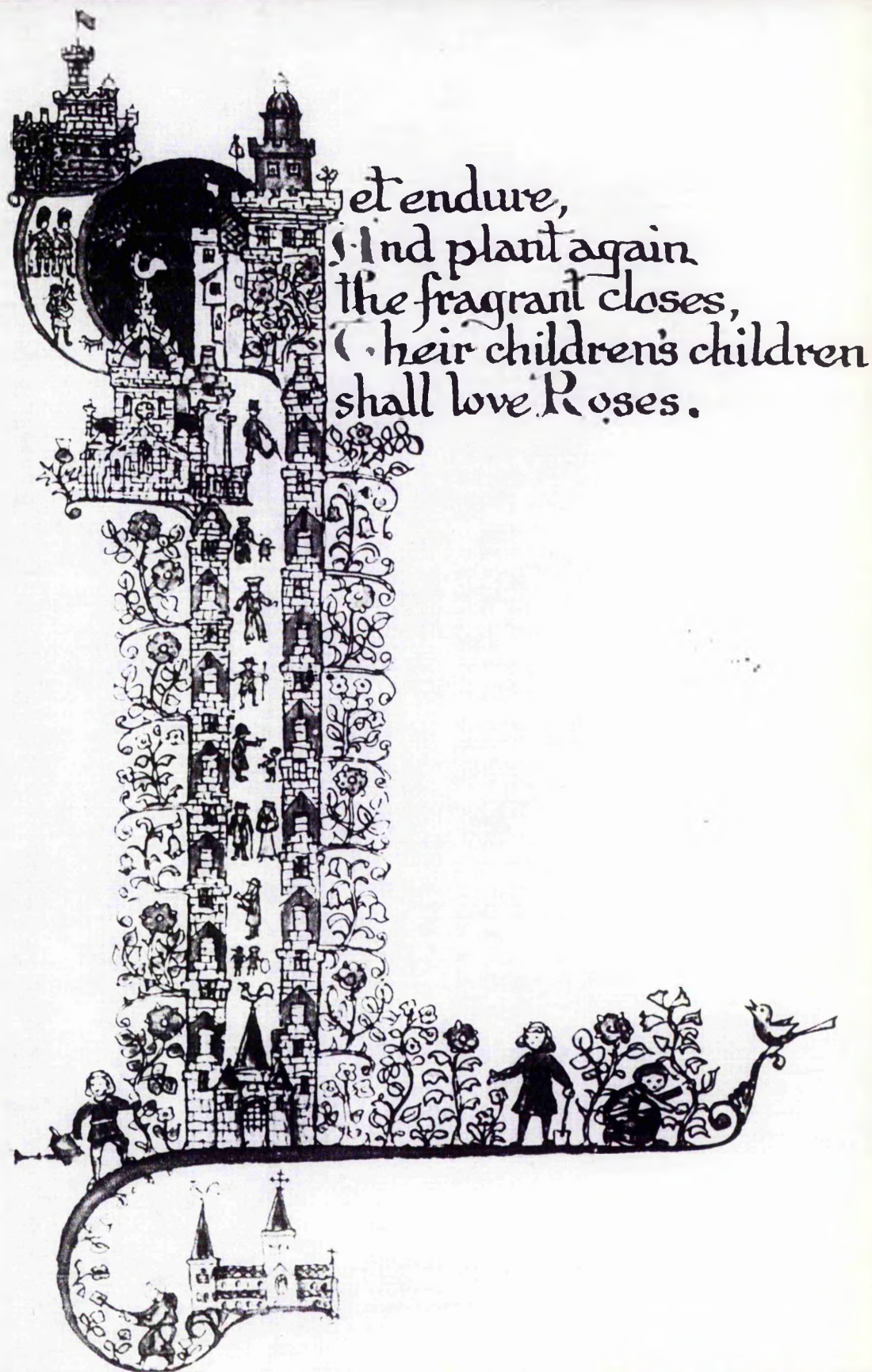


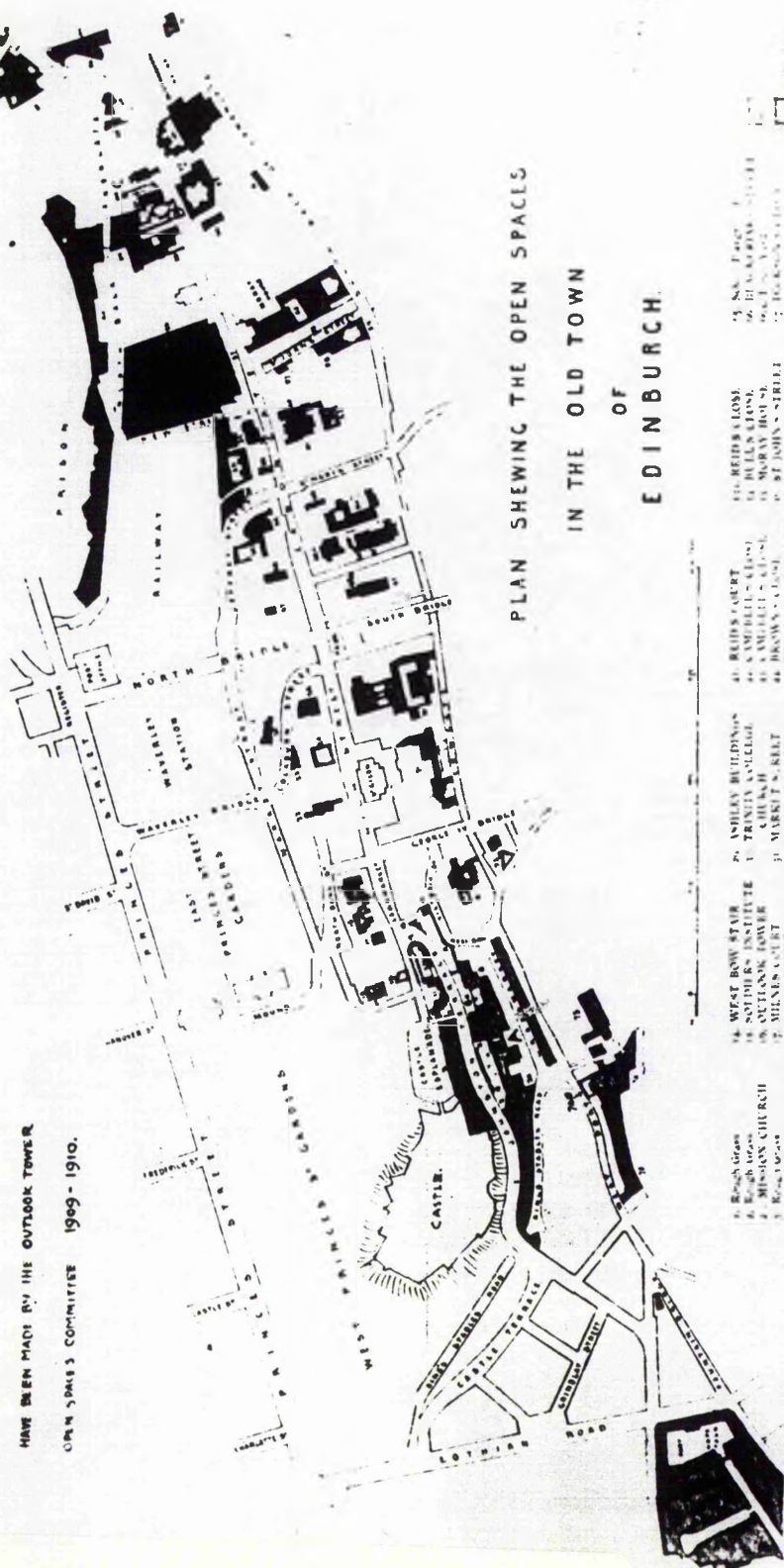
Figure 22:

GARDEN. Nos. 7, 8, 9, 16, 41, 72, 74

HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE OUTLOOK TOWER

OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE 1909-1910.

# PLAN SHEWING THE OPEN SPACES IN THE OLD TOWN OF EDINBURGH.



- |                       |                        |                       |               |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Rough Green        | 26. WEST BOW STAR      | 51. REID'S CLOSE      | 74. N. F. G.  |
| 2. MISSION CHURCH     | 27. SOUTHERN INSTITUTE | 52. BELL'S CLOSE      | 75. B. G. G.  |
| 3. R. G. G.           | 28. OUTLOOK TOWER      | 53. MURRAY HOUSE      | 76. T. G. G.  |
| 4. SANDHURST QUARTERS | 29. JAMES COURT        | 54. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 77. T. G. G.  |
| 5. T. G. G.           | 30. JAMES COURT        | 55. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 78. T. G. G.  |
| 6. T. G. G.           | 31. JAMES COURT        | 56. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 79. T. G. G.  |
| 7. T. G. G.           | 32. JAMES COURT        | 57. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 80. T. G. G.  |
| 8. T. G. G.           | 33. JAMES COURT        | 58. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 81. T. G. G.  |
| 9. T. G. G.           | 34. JAMES COURT        | 59. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 82. T. G. G.  |
| 10. T. G. G.          | 35. JAMES COURT        | 60. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 83. T. G. G.  |
| 11. T. G. G.          | 36. JAMES COURT        | 61. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 84. T. G. G.  |
| 12. T. G. G.          | 37. JAMES COURT        | 62. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 85. T. G. G.  |
| 13. T. G. G.          | 38. JAMES COURT        | 63. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 86. T. G. G.  |
| 14. T. G. G.          | 39. JAMES COURT        | 64. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 87. T. G. G.  |
| 15. T. G. G.          | 40. JAMES COURT        | 65. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 88. T. G. G.  |
| 16. T. G. G.          | 41. JAMES COURT        | 66. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 89. T. G. G.  |
| 17. T. G. G.          | 42. JAMES COURT        | 67. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 90. T. G. G.  |
| 18. T. G. G.          | 43. JAMES COURT        | 68. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 91. T. G. G.  |
| 19. T. G. G.          | 44. JAMES COURT        | 69. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 92. T. G. G.  |
| 20. T. G. G.          | 45. JAMES COURT        | 70. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 93. T. G. G.  |
| 21. T. G. G.          | 46. JAMES COURT        | 71. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 94. T. G. G.  |
| 22. T. G. G.          | 47. JAMES COURT        | 72. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 95. T. G. G.  |
| 23. T. G. G.          | 48. JAMES COURT        | 73. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 96. T. G. G.  |
| 24. T. G. G.          | 49. JAMES COURT        | 74. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 97. T. G. G.  |
| 25. T. G. G.          | 50. JAMES COURT        | 75. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 98. T. G. G.  |
|                       |                        | 76. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 99. T. G. G.  |
|                       |                        | 77. ST. JOHN'S STREET | 100. T. G. G. |

Figure 23:



a Tower. Situated in Edinburgh's historic quarter, near the Esplanade and the Castle - whose mighty and imposing bulk crowns the Castle Hill - it overlooks the city and, from its top, affords a commanding panoramic view in all directions which must be unique in the world'. (3)

The optical apparatus the Short family had erected on the roof of the tower was a camera obscura, which consisted of a simple convex lens and a flat mirror. A white table placed at the focal length of the lens acted as a screen on to which was projected a picture of the surrounding environment, the mirror having bent the rays of light onto the lens and thence the table screen.

What Geddes made of the tower and camera is comprehensively explained in A First Visit to the Outlook Tower published in 1906 by Geddes and Colleagues. The contents of the five floors of the tower and the function of the camera as explained in this guide are repeated in all the literature on Geddes' work. The impression given is that this description outlines the true realisation of the Outlook Tower as Geddes had originally conceived and developed it. The description however is more accurately understood as an ideal that Geddes aspired to realise: the Tower in reality was only an approximation to the aspirations Geddes had for it. However to establish the framework of the ideal-type



of the Outlook Tower that Geddes set out on so many occasions and in so many places it will be necessary to outline the composite and to some extent mythological notion of the Tower that Geddes himself described in the 1906 guide.

The Tower comprised five storeys and a terrace roof with a small turret that contained the Camera Obscura. Each of the five floors contained an exhibition which in descent moved from the familiar to the unfamiliar, the known to the unknown. In descending order these were the Edinburgh Room, the Scotland Room and then the rooms of Language, Europe and the World. Geddes recommended that on entering the visitor should proceed at once to the terrace roof where the immediate, the dramatic panorama of the city and its surrounding countryside, could be viewed in all directions. From the vision of the empirical world of man and nature in its unity and seen in natural light, the visitor then entered the camera obscura in the upper part of the octagon turret.

Here in a darkened room and on a round white table positioned horizontally to the floor the intensity of daylight was subdued and the image and its colours, without the interfering cross-rays of everyday vision, was clarified and stilled. The camera could be revolved by hand through 360 degrees giving the full panorama of city and country in a colour and tone,

Geddes wrote, that gave 'the pictorial truth and beauty of things'. (4) In the eighteenth century it had become common for landscape artists to use a portable camera obscura housed in a tent for sketching. A natural extension of this function in the nineteenth century was in the viewing of picturesque landscapes and tourist panoramas by the general public.

Here were united two founding interests of Geddes' pedagogy: the extension of popular opportunities for education and the importance of what he called the education of the eye:

'The experience of the Camera is helpful to the visitor in two main ways. On the one hand it gives him a fresh outlook on Edinburgh and its region, a renewed sense of its wonder and beauty; on the other it helps the ordinary observer to see the familiar scene somewhat in the way that the artist has trained himself habitually to do, and thus enables him better to understand the artist's vision. He has had a lesson in the art of seeing'. (5)

The restoration of the faculty of seeing through the artist's vision was simultaneously a recovery of the accuracy of observation so necessary to the work of the scientist. Here we have Geddes' familiar plan for the unity and synthesis of knowledge and an

overcoming of specialization. Thus the art of seeing:

'gives us a clue to one of the main purposes of the Tower. It is growingly recognised that it is necessary to supplement our present bookish education by training people to observe at first hand, and to make use of their observations for themselves. But if we are to observe at first hand we must begin by observing the things immediately around us, our own city and our region; and it is a great help towards beginning our survey if we can see what habit has made commonplace in such a way as to re-awaken our interest and revive our sense of its beauty'. (6)

Leaving the Camera Obscura in the upper part of the Turret and descending in the lower part to what was known as the Octagon Room, the visitor notices a small bare cell behind a curtained doorway. In Geddes' heavy symbolism this was meant to indicate that direct observation requires the complement of reflection. A principal cause of reflection, to ask what was the relationship of the immediate environment and that beyond the horizon, found stimulus in numerous geographical apparatus located in the rest of the Octagon Room.

This apparatus comprised the following:

### **The Episcopo - in Geddes' words:-**

'the first example of a simple yet ingenious and carefully worked out device for arousing both the everyday observer from his indifference, and the geographer from his attachment to the map or even the ordinary globe, by compelling both to visualise the work as if it were suddenly to become transparent beneath one's feet. Looking thus in imagination through the earth from the upright stick in the centre of the instrument and along its various threads, he sees deep down and far away in the long perspective of nearly eight thousand miles the Antipodes - New Zealand, Australia - of trifling size, the vast Pacific Ocean itself, its whole hemisphere of water shrunk into a space incredibly small, while the nearer lands bulk more and more largely as they approach, till the European countries are largest; the nearer, like Scandinavia, apparently out of all proportion enormous, ... here, for the first time, we see the world as it is, its points as fixed in their permanent relation to us here'.

### **The Hollow Globe -**

'To make this large episcopo fully intelligible it may be usefully compared with its smaller and earlier, yet in some ways simpler form, the Hollow

Globe, of which an example with printed explanations, as published for school and geographical students, will be found close by'.

#### **Orientation Table, etc -**

'Returning to the episcope, the names and directions of various places with their distance in miles from Edinburgh, will be found marked around its edge ... Another set of orientation lines is cut in the stone coping of the parapet of the flat roof without. Finally, looking from the north side of the episcope southwards, two elongated red spots will be noticed on the south wall. These small spaces indicate not only the direction of London and Paris respectively, ... but the actual appearance of size they would present if it were possible to see them. A similar indication for the North Pole is marked on the north wall; and the observer may now continue this in imagination, and see all the world at will'.

#### **The New (Hollow) Celestial Sphere -**

'To escape from the difficulty of our outsideness to the ordinary celestial sphere ... we should obviously get inside it. Let the observer then transfer himself in imagination from the outside of an opaque mirror-sphere reflecting the stars, to

the centre of a transparent one. Instead of seeing only images of each star and each constellation perplexingly reversed, he sees themselves ... Hence the present model, which has been devised and executed by M. Galeron'.

### **The Cosmosphere and other Appliances -**

'if we were now to adjust the terrestrial globe into the centre of this celestial sphere, thus producing a completer model or Cosmosphere. ... Pending the preparation of this exhibit, however, much may be done with the simple projection of the heavenly vault upon a flat star-map, the Planisphere, of which an example hangs upon the wall'.

### **The Earth's Course and the Seasons -**

'the greater part of our earth's orbit is represented by the horizontal shelf running round three quarters of the room at a height of seven feet above the floor, and the sun by the gilt ball hanging from the centre of the roof. Since the entrance and the staircase interfere, the model orbit is interrupted for the position from 6th September to 14th September; but for the rest of the year the model earth may be seen at its proper place in its orbit and its weekly or even daily advance is thus brought before us...'



Passing from the Octagon Room to the Glass Roof and the view beyond the visitor was confronted with what Geddes saw as an introduction to biological and social studies. A small Nature Study collection including living plants, birds and fishes was housed under the Glass Roof. The door opening out onto the terrace looked down upon the High Street with its Castle and Palace and churches, law courts and slums presenting 'a concrete summary of the social fabric of which we form a part'. (7)

From the terrace roof the visitor then descends to the Edinburgh Room. This was the key room in all Geddes' experiments with the Outlook Tower, and all the other exhibits were subordinate to it. Here was based most of his research and from it he developed the concept of survey of city and region for which he is best known to posterity.

At the centre of the room was a relief model of the topography of the city at the scale of one foot to the inch and with vertical relief in true scale. Around the walls was a painted frieze of the city by James Cadenhead, associate of the Royal Scottish Academy and Helen Hay. Geddes saw this and the relief model as 'the mutual complementing of science and art'. (8) Around the rest of the walls were a series of illustrations of the historical evolution of the city including drawings, engravings, photographs and plans. The collection had been brought together by its

curator J. Bruce Home, who had made the first survey of historical buildings in the Old Town. He had been born in the shadow of the Castle in 1830 and had spent most of his life in London in the printing trade. He regarded the 1867 Improvement Act in Edinburgh as a destructive folly that had devastated the picturesque character of the Old Town and he set about recording what was left in drawings he made when he returned to the city on his retirement. A volume of these was published as Old Edinburgh Houses, and the original drawings were all bought for the City's Collection after his death in 1913. The purchase was as a result of Geddes's initiative and prompting and the whole collection is currently in the City Art Centre.

A carved model of the City Cross in the north end of the room was placed there 'as a fitting symbol of citizenship'. (9) The old mercat's cross had been restored and replaced behind St. Giles, the Town Kirk, and opposite the City Chambers, at the initiative and expense of William Ewart Gladstone in recognition of his Edinburgh forebears. Sydney Mitchell was the architect for the reconstruction and he had close association with the renewal of the Old Town and Geddes's work. At the 1886 Industrial Exhibition in the Meadows he designed a reconstruction of the High Street of the Old Town to scale with a composite of the most important buildings for the previous three hundred years.

Geddes had engaged Mitchell to build a major part of the Ramsay Garden in the 1890's. The model of the City Cross was a central object of a section showing proposed improvements, workmen's housing and plans for urban renewal thus associating historical reconstruction of the Old Town with social improvement.

The next room below the Edinburgh Room is the **Scotland Room** and the room below that is the **Empire (or Language) Room**. Both rooms the Guide tells us are 'temporarily closed'. The Language Room, where 'it is proposed to have collections representing the geography and history of the English-speaking world - the Empire and the United States' never came into existence. It is to be suspected that the number of subjects expounded to fill the floors available. The Scotland Room had a less shadowy history than the language room. It comprised, as the Guide put, 'an analgous collection' to the Edinburgh Room with a large relief model and a map of Scotland painted on the floor, and the familiar selection of drawings and photographs. Along the wall was W.G. Burn-Murdoch's design for the processional frieze of Scottish history, a parade of representative figures and leaders from early history to the present.

On the Staircase between the floors were a number of exhibits that were the quintessence of Geddes's ideas and their working out in The Tower - The **Botanical Globe**, designed by the French geographer Elisee Reclus (of whom, more below) was first and was coloured to represent the characteristic vegetation of different regions of the world, with a colour scheme hanging beside it. Further down the stair were two stained glass windows: the first of the Valley Section entitled, Typical Region: Mountain to Sea, with Fundamental Occupations, and the second, The Good Shepherd, one of the basic occupations. The Valley Section Panel bore the legend Microcosmos Naturae, Sedes Hominum, Theatrum Historiae, Eutopia Futuris and represented, Geddes wrote,

'a stretch of landscape from sea to hill-top passing up through wheatlands and oatlands, through pasture and forest, and descending on the other side with a wider slope. This may be viewed in various ways, for we may think of it as the landscape we have just looked at from the gallery of the Camera Tower, stretching from the blue waters of the Forth to the bare Pentland hill-tops; or we may regard it as a diagram of the great plain of Europe rising slowly to the mountains, or of North America from the Atlantic sea-board to the Rockies and beyond. So that we come to see that

the little landscape is a typical section of the Earth at many points, and indeed as the legend written under it tells us, a "microcosm of nature"'. .

Continuing down the staircase were finally located, representing the 'Unity of the Arts and Sciences', the **Lapis Philosophorum** and the **Arbor Saeculorum**. The first, forming a panel at the side of the door, represented in outline a graphic notation of the Arts and the Sciences. The second, a stained-glass window still further down the stair, was to represent 'the twofold aspects of each historic era', the temporal and the spiritual. Both these objects are an exotic manifestation of Geddes' obsessive concern with the graphical representation of concepts. The details of their symbols, which are embarrassingly naive if not downright daft, are given in an appendix to this chapter.

In the **Europe Room**, next in sequence of descent, again is embodied 'one of the chief ideas which the Tower aims at expressing, viz. that of graphic representation as an aid to clearer thought, and to emancipation from the tyranny of detail'. The principal exhibit here is a chart 'which represents in coloured diagram the stream of European history from the fourth century A.D. to the nineteenth. Each

sheet of the chart represents a different century and has a different colour scheme (purple for Imperial Rome). The last sheet, nearest the present day 'invites forecast, the prevision of the future by the help of interpretation of the past'. Two busts in the room symbolise two great types: the Medieval and the Renaissance. Dante represents the first and Henry IV of France the second. Books for reference in the room represent 'by no means complete, but merely, as throughout the Tower, a typical collection'.

Finally, the entrance hall and ground floor of the Tower is devoted to the world (**World Room**). Here is another great globe representing 'a very generalised statement of the physical features of the world', coloured to denote land and water and

'If it be taken as representing the size of the earth, a ball  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter at the NE corner of the Tolbooth Church opposite would indicate the relative size and distance from the earth of the moon, while Dalmahoy Hill, some ten miles away, would roughly represent the relative size and distance from the earth of the sun'.

A reference collection of books of travel and general geography and maps and atlases are available for more detailed perusal. In the entrance hall is a bust of

Pallas, 'suggesting that all our knowledge is derived from experience of the world' and that 'we shall have need of all our wisdom in dealing with its problems'; while elsewhere 'Pandora with her box reminds that curiosity is the beginning of knowledge'!



The history of Geddes' role in the development of the Tower can be classified into three major periods. Each period was marked by a crisis in the fortune of the Tower and a recovery and response. The three periods were as follows:

1) The Toynbee Hall Model 1886 to 1905

Geddes' move with his wife to live in the Old Town tenement in 1886 was a conscious initiative, after the Toynbee Hall model, of implanting well-heeled students in the midst of the slums. He very quickly converted this primarily social concern into a quest to create what he called a Scottish renaissance. This was an educational and cultural renewal rather than social or political reform. As part of this endeavour he acquired a substantial number of properties in the Old Town, especially for his University Halls of Residence and his Summer Schools. The Outlook Tower was one such acquisition. The managerial and financial problems of his property portfolio became too burdensome for him to sustain, and this crisis precipitated the formation of the Town and Gown Association to take the property off his hands. From 1897 onwards he paid rent to the Association for the Tower.

Just as in the first period Geddes' overstretched financial resources precipitated a crisis that was only resolved in terms of his city improvement schemes by the formation of the Town and Gown Association, so in the second period, after 1905, a crisis in Geddes' ability to fund the Outlook Tower resulted in the formation of the Outlook Tower Association. The turning point of the second period, however, was long apparent before 1905. As early as 1900 the signs were clearly apparent. In that year turning from his development of a Latin Quarter in the Lawnmarket to its original source, he was happy to spend a year-long cultural carouse in Paris, where he went to organise his International Assembly. The ultimate development and culmination of his Summer Schools in Edinburgh, the Paris Assembly was the occasion and cause of their terminal decline. After 1900 Geddes' interest in the Summer Schools effectively ended and he cast around for other roles to play.

## 2) 'My Long meditated and Arrested Tower' 1905-1914

'The Outlook Tower', Lewis Mumford wrote, 'is both a real building and an idea'. (1) Between the idea and the reality Geddes was rarely able to elucidate a correspondence. The trouble was that the idea kept changing or, at least, never stayed

constant long enough for its (even approximate) realisation. Thomas Whitson, Geddes' life-long collaborator and accountant had his own explanation: the Tower came first and Geddes search for a use for it was an opportunistic afterthought. 'You and others', he wrote to Edward McGegan the Secretary of the Outlook Tower the year after Geddes' death in 1932,

'may say Geddes had his idea first and the Tower afterwards. I knew Geddes longer than you and in many ways better than a large number of people who knew him well and I have no hesitation in saying that the idea grew in order to find a use for the Camera Obscura and the building in which it was situated'. (11)

McGegan raised the matter of Whitson's scepticism with another life-long collaborator of Geddes', John Ross, and soon after received an answer that probably got the matter right: 'what he says' Ross wrote,

'in regard to the idea of the Tower is in a certain sense quite true. P.G. no doubt did expand his idea for the Tower in order to find a use for the Camera Obscura, but what I think

T.B. does not appreciate, and never has appreciated, is that the ideas for the Tower were there in his mind'. (12)

Whatever the Tower was in Geddes' mind it could mean a whole different combination of things or a particular emphasis according to the audience, occasion or inspiration. To Professor Wilson of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum the Tower was 'our little yeast factory' (13); to a Mr. Coit it was 'a kind of collective germ of a synthetic congress; (14) to William James at Harvard it was an 'Index Museum, Laboratory of Synthetics, Graphics and so on'; (15) and to Dr. Paton in Hampstead it was 'simply the latest development of our Edinburgh tradition of Encyclopaedias'. (16) To the Chairman of the Outlook Tower Committee the Tower's 'essential idea' P.G. wrote was 'that of presenting the essentials of thought side by side with the practical possibilities of action', (17) as manifested in the Edinburgh room, the experience of which should be compared with other cities as an Encyclopaedia Civica. To many correspondents Geddes described his Tower 'as a many armed sign-post to the world's knowledge' and to Dr. Paton the detailed implications were that it was not merely an Encyclopaedia in the common usage but also an Encyclopaedia Graphica, an Encyclopaedia

Synthetica, and also Civica, Geographica and Historica.

To the same Paton Geddes submitted that the Tower contained 'in germ no doubt, the essential features of a clearing-house of politics, conservative of past growth, yet progressive towards new' It could solve the pressing issues of the day:

'Could I set up a Tower in Dublin it would similarly do justice to Dublin and to Ireland as fully as Nationalist members and Unionist League could desire; yet similarly in Belfast and Dublin too it would en of and for the Ulster man and the Englishman, Trinity College and all'.

Geddes' ambitious reach was not restricted to the British Isles: in the Language storey of the Tower the 'renascent liberal' found 'in the recognition of the United States' the 'corrective to undue imperialism'. (19) And he could even work in Asia while he was at it:

'Japan, with its aristo-democratic diffusion of beauty, India with its spiritual search for truth, China with its combined earnestness and practical reverence towards the good, again need their storey and their museum'. (20)

All this left many people near to Geddes and the Tower crave for coherence and some economy of purpose. As early as 1901, T.R.R. Marr, one of Geddes' most competent followers and who became a major force for housing in Manchester, spelled out the organisational and financial resources that would be prerequisite to progress at the Tower: 'a capable Director' for organisation and management; a secretary; a typist; one or more boy apprentices; special workers for models etc. as required; 'an organised body of workers' who would 'develop the Tower and be the real workers'. All this would mean 'an enormous increase in expenditure' which Marr estimated at £750 a year. 'From the point of view of floating the Tower', he concluded

'it is essential to get the Tower recognised as a going concern - an invention that works and not only on paper. Some compromise might keep the Tower in its present imperfect state but the result will not be satisfactory'. (21)

The money, of course, was not forthcoming and Marr, not being able to allow his labour to be used as a cheap subsidy, had to move to Manchester for a paid job. It was from there the following year he wrote showing that even at a distance he knew the full

implications of the inadequate resources of the Tower for Geddes' work:

'You are losing your best work, your time, and your first claim on your own ideas through not having the right kind of business-man to work with you'.  
(22)

Things were so bad in the organisation and finances of the Tower that Thomas Whitson could write to Geddes a month later that even people living in the adjacent Ramsay Garden apartments that Geddes had built did not know where the Outlook Tower was located. (23)

Geddes was himself well aware of the shortcomings of the Tower. A year after Marr's letter, in 1904, he wrote to Lady Welby in a mood of cold realism that the Tower had failed; (24) and the following year to the Chairman of the Outlook Tower Committee that the Tower 'in its present inchoate form lies open to numerous criticisms'. (25)

In the same letter to the Tower Committee Geddes stated that his 'long arrested Tower' had been 'long-meditated'. The problem with the Tower was not just that it lacked resources, which it most certainly did;



it was also and more fundamentally that Geddes was not clear what he wanted the Tower to be. Geddes' idea of the Tower suffered from compression: he tried to get everything into it. Or it suffered from over-expansion: he tried to extend it into everything. In the period after the 1900 Paris International Assembly failure, he was increasingly obliged, for both intellectual and monetary resource needs, to find an anchor and an identity in one of the emerging professional communities of geography, sociology or town planning.

His boldest attempt to set up his stall amongst the geographers was his proposal to found a National Institute of Geography in 1902. This was not a case of orienting the work and the contents of the existing Outlook Tower toward a particular intellectual community, but an attempt to set up a completely new institution outside the one on Castlehill. When he saw an opening sentiment was no obstacle to Geddes.

The genesis of Patrick Geddes' National Institute proposal lay in his long-established interest in building the Great Relief Globe that his anarchist-geographer friend Elisee Reclus had tried to erect in the 1900 Paris Exposition. Geddes' National Institute proposal combined an Outlook Tower, a Reclus

Great Relief Globe and the Celestial Globe of Albert Galeron's from the 1900 Exposition (see figure 19). In the 1900 Exposition Reclus had the idea of developing the Great Globe as the successor centre-piece and permanent legacy of the Exposition as the Eiffel Tower had been in the Paris Exposition of 1889. The globe he had in mind would be developed at a scale of 1:100,00 (that is a diameter of 420 ft.) and visitors would be able to circumnavigate it by a spiralling walkway or by some circulating tramway system. The simultaneous, but independent invention of a cosmorama or map of the heavens by architect Albert Galeron led to the two men combining their proposals. The estimated construction cost of 20 to 50 million francs was prohibitive and the structure was never built. (26)

As can be seen from the design of Geddes' proposal (Figure 19) the Reclus and Galeron globes are separate structures, and much smaller in scale. The Tower of Regional Survey would be 250 ft. high and 60 ft. square at the base and the two globes would have a diameter of about 75 ft. There would be a lavish panoply of the illustrative material so dear to Geddes' heart. Around the Celestial Globe would be astronomical collections with photographs, star maps, models and side rooms for 'experimental illustration

of the physical phenomena of the universe'. (26) The Relief Globe in parallel would have around the surrounding walls photographs, pictures and panoramas showing the connection of scenery with geology and geography. This 'Cosmic presentment of Universal Geography' would have its complement 'the human method' in ascending spatial scales of City, Region, Nation, State and Empire in descending storeys of the Tower as in the Outlook Tower on Castlehill. (27) Although the intelligent and commercially-astute director of the renowned map-makers, J.G. Bartholomew, keenly supported Geddes' endeavour, and although P.G. had tried to interest William Arrol, financier of the Forth Bridge, in building a globe as early as 1898, it came to nought. (28)

The emerging role and definition of the Tower, the subject of Geddes' 'long meditations', related sensitively to the tactics necessary to engage the support of academics struggling to establish professional respectability and institutionalisation. A.J. Herbertson, a student and research assistant of Geddes, and eventually head of the influential department at Oxford, set out the case for Geography at the Tower in a letter to Geddes in 1896: (29)

'The tactics I would recommend are to emphasise 1st Geography and 2nd History. ... By making geographical matters prominent we may gain the support of R.S.G.S., (Royal Scottish Geographical Society) and it would be a very great pity if there could not be co-operation with them. Bartholomew and Baily are anxious to help. But the latter has been scared by some newspaper reports of a lecture of yours in Glasgow, which he read to me on Saturday, pointing out how they said nothing about a geographical much about a social museum, + how there would be no hope of getting the R.S.G.S. council to support such a scheme. I imagine the councillors are quite clear what you are driving at + fear you may commit them to all your social ideas!

The advice of Geddes' young assistant was straightforward and unequivocal:

'(1) either to call it a Geographical Museum until people were educated enough to appreciate the Social Museum into which it might slowly evolve;

(2) or to keep the big rooms in direct line of communication from street to camera for Geography and keep social matters in an inner room for those willing and fit to enter. The doors might be half open so that those who cared might enter.

In either way there would be a distinct geographical museum which the Society could support'. (30)

Geography was mentioned as the stuff of regional survey in Geddes' speech to propose the motion to found a Sociological Society at the inaugural conference in London on June 29th 1903. In the same speech Geddes said also that regional survey was the concrete stuff of sociology. It was only the year before that Geddes had published his proposals for a national institute of geography in the Scottish Geographical Magazine. This was a development of his Outlook Tower on Castlehill. At the same time he was explaining to the founders of the Sociological Society that the Outlook Tower was both a Sociological Observatory and a Sociological Laboratory. Victor Branford a student of Geddes at Edinburgh, lecturer at the summer schools and life-long collaborator and friend was founder and organiser of the Sociological Society and editor of its journal. Martin White, the Liberal M.P. from Dundee and friend of Geddes who founded Geddes' chair (of Botany!) at the University College there, was also a founder of the Sociological Society. He endowed the first chair of sociology in Britain at the London School of Economics for Geddes, but Geddes made a hash of his interview and the post

went to T.H. Hobhouse. At least this was his son Arthur's explanation: that before the interview his father 'gave a bad lecture'. He 'rushed up by train and he hadn't thought it out. It was a scrambled talk such as P.G. sometimes gave instead of a lecture, so he didn't get the chair'. (31) Although P.G.'s capacity for scrambling and rushing reads true, a more likely explanation was that the academic sociological fraternity had the same attitude to Geddes as did the geographical: that he wasn't one of them. Yet the measure of the extent to which the Outlook Tower was viewed as a centre of sociology may be gauged by Charles Zueblin's article in the American Journal of Sociology in 1899 describing the Tower as the world's first sociological laboratory.

The third area of emergent professional incorporation in which Geddes was active was that of town planning. Although the Town Planning Institute, the professional body for town planning, was not founded until 1913, with the ubiquitous Geddes one of the founders, he had been active in town planning long before that date. His work in the renewal of Edinburgh's Old Town was his predominant activity in a busy life for the fifteen years prior to 1900. The culmination of this work was in the Carnegie Study for Dunfermline in 1903. The Edinburgh room in the Outlook Tower was the focus and outcome of all this activity. It was the

civics laboratory in which Geddes developed his theory and practice of city and regional surveys. This work climaxed after the passing of the first town planning act in 1909 at the exhibition he mounted at the Royal Academy in London in 1910, his annus mirabilis. The exhibition, culled from the Outlook Tower, went on to tour Edinburgh, Dublin and Belfast and it was a result of its triumphant success that he was invited to assist the Aberdeens in the planning of Dublin and judge the competition for a town plan for the city. The exhibition went on to Madras at the invitation of the governor, Lord Pentland, the Aberdeen's son-in-law, and so began Geddes' long association with town planning in India.

#### The Outlook Tower Crisis of 1905

The identity crisis of the Outlook Tower, at least in the world's mind if not Geddes', came to a head in 1905 when he advised the Town and Gown Association that he would have to terminate his lease of the Tower. The principal and immediate reason for his inability to continue to support the activities of the Tower was financial. His abortive plans for an international assembly at the 1901 Glasgow World Fair had left him seriously out-of-pocket, and he had an accumulation of commercial debts stretching back a



decade. Bills were still coming in in 1902 for the financially disastrous publishing house he started with Fiona Macleod in 1895 and his scheme to develop a street of eight houses on Garden City lines at Roseburn Cliff in the West of Edinburgh was in all probability the final crisis that threatened to bring down all about him in ruins.

The gathering crisis of the finances of the Tower and Geddes' overstrained and meagre resources first broke in the Spring of 1903. In a letter to Rector Marshall of the City's High School pleading for help he stated bluntly that 'both Town and Gown and I personally have spent the last penny we can afford'. Without any outside help, he warned, he would have to give up':

'after over twenty years' almost entirely unpaid work in Edinburgh at various sorts of educational pioneering, I must now either put my endeavours on a self-supporting basis, or pull up stakes altogether'. (32)

Geddes was impelled to look around him. He applied for the Directorship of the Museum of Art in Chambers Street in 1903 but met with no success, and the following year he applied for the Principalship of the Durham College of Science in Newcastle with similar results.

He began to see the uncongenial climate of Edinburgh as the problem, a culture he once said of its safe professionalism, 'frozen as if in an ice-pack'. John Bartholomew told him not to be surprised at the social claustrophobia and shrivelled intellectual ideals of Edinburgh:

'Whatever appearance of failure there may be in giving up the Tower - there can be none to those who in any way understand or appreciate it, and to you it has served its purpose as an experiment and I believe that its fuller realisation in the next stage of its evolution is made more possible in London than in Edinburgh. You should know by this time that Edin. has the most inhospitable soil and climate for new growth - No plant that is not be very tough financially and hardy orthodoxically, has much chance of thriving here - for not only is the soil full of clayey social prejudices but the air is cold and uncongenial in its distrust of anything speculative - even although it were a toss up for Heaven!' (32)

Bartholomew was only confirming what Geddes had already taken to heart and in 1903 P.G. made various soundings in America and London for opportunities to develop the Tower. The founding of the Sociological Society in London that year and the development of the

University of London after its great reform in 1898, with its substantial University Extension work, seemed to suggest a more congenial environment. To Charles Booth in London he wrote on 2 April 1903 that 'it is really in London rather than in Edinburgh that I should be trying to drive in my many-armed support to the radiating paths of knowledge...' (33) To Lord Reay in London four days later he repeated his view of the attractions of London over Edinburgh in his endeavour 'to set up my hundred-armed sign post to the world of knowledge'. (34)

On the same day he wrote to Charles Booth however, Geddes could show appropriate market sensitivity in his pitch to William James at Harvard.

'It is really, however, in America rather than here that I should be trying to drive in my many-armed sign post to the radiating pattern of knowledge'. (35)

Again on the same day he wrote to Prof. Zeublin of the University of Chicago, author of the essay on the Outlook Tower as the world's first sociological laboratory, and explained that it was not 'in an old centre like Edinburgh' that he could 'easily find room for any new institution ... but rather in a newer, a more open and active centre like your own'. (36) In

the same batch of letters searching for openings, it was not a commercially bashful Geddes that wrote to Dr. Tolman in New York:

'I put it to you as a business proposal, just as a British publisher may arrange with an American one, and with commission on business done. I am prepared to deliver the goods within a reasonable time, i.e. to present an outline varying in completeness according to the amount which can be expended. . . Looked at one way this would include like the Edinburgh Tower in its uppermost turret and storey, the outlooks of Art and Science, with the elemental apparatus, bibliography and instructions for use in each main branch of science, as per Nature Study Syllabus: (2) an outline of Geography and History, the Economical Social activities of the City, Region, Nation, Language, Civilisation, and World, in successive rooms or superposed storeys, as at Edinburgh. ... I would suggest that at least 25 thousand dollars should be allowed for equipment of an institution on the same scale. But this is rather too small; 50 thousand dollars would do'. (37)

In 1904, a year after this energetic bout of commercial lobbying, Geddes' financial position had not improved. 'I am compelled reluctantly', he wrote to Lady Welby on 22 October, 'to give up both home here and work in Edinburgh' and he was 'forced to think more seriously of making London our headquarters - and using my next term's (Lent '05) lecturing in London and Oxford as an experimental reconnaissance'. (38) And three months later, in February 1905, he was still complaining that 'as a matter of concrete fact it (the Tower) has eaten its head off for many years' and that 'in Edinburgh it is extremely difficult to make much headway against the frozen legalism and traditionalism which ... have invaded all classes'. He continued to look towards the Imperial Metropolis - 'in London I believe it could soon be made self-supporting' - and enquired of his correspondent whether among some new group of buildings 'such as are now rising everywhere' it would not be possible 'to take their attic-storey, nowadays so easily reached by an elevator; and thus have in a cheaper and even more convenient way successive rooms on the same level to represent the storeys of my Edinburgh Tower'. (39)

When the collapse finally came in 1905 Geddes' Edinburgh supporters rallied round. So many premature notifications of mortality, however in earnest Geddes was on such occasions, were always negated by his ever-optimistic renewal of hope and Lazarus-like bounce back. Among the socially-conscious professors of the University, the broader-minded ministers of the kirk, the more adventurous professionals, and the middle class youth of Edinburgh yearning for involvement, Geddes' permanently imminent decline and his air of eccentric impoverishment is what gave the unconventional and bohemian allure to many of his ventures. He was not supposed to be driven from the city by lack of funds and move bag and baggage to London or even America. 'As you know', he was to write to those Edinburgh collaborators that came to his aid, 'it is my actual notice to my landlords of immediate partial closure which has led to the present gratifying interest in the Tower'. (40)

From old acquaintances from the Summer School days and members of the Town and Gown Association, an Outlook Tower Committee was formed that asked him: 'Here is the nucleus of a very varied and representative committee: what form is its help to take? In what ways can such general goodwill and so many special aptitudes be utilised'. (41) In his reply to the

Chairman of the Committee Geddes was quite adamant that this, 'the costliest of all the white elephants I have tried keeping', would have to be put on 'a business footing, not an eleemosynary one' since 'for nearly twenty years I have found little or no time or opportunity for bread-winning work in Edinburgh'. If resources in both finance and labour were forthcoming - not that he should 'be understood as begging for alms now, a year or two's rent on trial or the like' - he pledged to continue working and developing the Tower. (42)

The Committee came up with two proposals. The first was to secure time and money to grant freedom from distractions and the cares of finance and organisation for Geddes to work on his ideas for the Tower. A Geddes Lecturing Fund was set up with a target of £1400 to provide Geddes with £200 for not less than five years. (43) Although Geddes told the Committee that he did 'not flatter himself that this lectureship is proposed merely "pour mes beaux yeux"' (44) they were probably wildly unrealistic to think he would tie himself down sufficiently long to organise a systematic presentation and clarification of his ideas. His zestful predilection for starting up new schemes was incorrigible: it was not simply lack of funds that kept him from developing the central ideas of the Outlook Tower, but his waywardness and



inability to stick to the matter in hand. Knowing well his old ways, for example, the Town and Gown Association elicited his 'express promise not to undertake anything' (45) new when they agreed to his small garden city housing scheme at Roseburn Cliff in Coltbridge in Edinburgh in 1903. In any case, the good intentions of the lectureship fund committee came to nought, possibly on account of the fact of Geddes' well known quixotic impulses. (46)

The second task the Committee set itself was to rescue the Outlook Tower, and in this they were by contrast startlingly successful. Within three weeks of his writing to the Chairman of the newly-established Outlook Tower Committee a public lecture on the Tower by the Rev. John Kelman was arranged to focus publicity and rally support. With Sir John Murray, the Director of the Challenger Expedition Commission, in the Chair, Kelman, a minister with literary ambitions, spoke in elevated prose of the Outlook Tower as an Interpreter's House and a Temple of Vision:

'it is the soul of the Tower that I have been describing. Its body has never grown to perfect stature and at the present time is sadly emaciated. ... The immediate necessity is that we shall perfect the part of the Tower which is now visible.

The object of this meeting is ... to bring before the notice of a wider circle of Edinburgh people one of the most interesting and valuable institutions that enrich their city'. (47)

At the end of the meeting a resolution was formally moved by Professor Paterson of the New College 'That a Committee be appointed in order to maintain and extend the usefulness of the Outlook Tower in such ways as they may find practicable'. The founder-members of the Outlook Tower Committee were a representative section of the kind of Edinburgh people who were attracted to the Geddes' circle: professors of the University, reforming ministers of the kirk, members of the bar and writers to the signet, and the city's artistic fringe and activist middle class youth. They included among the academics: G. Baldwin Brown, holder of the chair of art history at the University; the geographers Professor Baily, R.N. Rudmose Brown; Otto Schlapp of the languages department; A.P. Laurie, Principal of Heriot-Watt College; John G. Bartholomew of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and director of the map firm. Ministers included the speaker, the Rev. John Kelman; the proposer of the motion Rev. Prof. Paterson of the New College and Rev. Dr. John Glasse, minister of Greyfriars, friend of William Morris and, as lecturer to the Scottish Socialist Federation first introduced the

Irish/Marxist James Connolly to socialism. Artists included old Geddes' friends from the Summer School days: the painter James Cadenhead and his wife; Marjorie Kennedy Fraser, musician and collector of Hebridean folksong; artist and muralist Phoebe Traquair; the author Olphant Smeaton; and there was substantial congress of Edinburgh misses young and old, with time on their hands and a role to play.

Members of the founding committee were quick to demonstrate their mettle. Within a month of Kelman's lecture with telling despatch they had established the Outlook Tower Committee, with subordinate Executive and Finance Committees, and set out a programme of action on the Tower. On June 14th Geddes wrote to the Chairman of the Committee with resuscitated optimism that 'since my last letter to you matters have advanced beyond my utmost hopes'; (48) and exactly one month later, on 14th July 1905, the Executive Committee met to consider a report from the Finance Committee on matters requiring immediate attention. These included:

- 1) Putting in order the present contents and apparatus;
- 2) Labelling the same;
- 3) Preparation of a more detailed catalogue;
- 4) Preparation of a guide;

- 5) Completing the Orientation on the Turret taking in places of interest in the town;
- 6) More prominent notice boards in Ramsay Lane and Castle Hill;
- 7) Preparation of a postcard with views of the Tower;
- 8) Preparation of a course of lectures for the Winter;
- 9) Advertising the educational value of the Tower in the city's schools. (49)

The General Committee meeting of the Tower on 28th November 1905 heard that considerable progress had been made. Geddes and Oliver Smeaton had already given lectures, Arthur Thomson was about to, and the artist members had prepared a course of demonstrations on art. Geddes' proposal that Sub-Committees on Art, Civics, Nature Study, Geography and Education was accepted and members were appointed. At the General Committee Meeting of 30th January 1906 it was agreed that 'it was wiser not to attempt to form an Association till it was seen what development of the Tower was likely to take place' It was further agreed 'to ask people to become Members of the Tower on payment of a minimum subscription of 5/- per annum which would entitle the Member paying this sum to be admitted to the Tower and to the use of the books, exhibits etc.' (50) By the Committee Meeting of

6th April 1906 it was reported that an Arts and Crafts Exhibition had been held in the Tower, lectures had been given by Mr. James Paterson, Prof. Baldwin Brown, Mr. Cadenhead, Mr. Carr, Dr. Schlapp and Dr. Black; that a proof of the guide, A first visit to the Outlook Tower, was ready and that total income was £282-17-4, leaving a balance of £61-10-3.

It was a satisfied and optimistic Geddes, therefore, that could write to James Paterson, the Chairman of the Committee on September 3 1906 that 'the arrangement of the Tower has been in active progress during the vacation. Every storey has been gone through, cleared and re-arranged'. A detailed memorandum giving a floor by floor inventory of the Tower was enclosed.

The resuscitation of the Outlook Tower provided Geddes with the platform to launch his career as a town planner with an international reputation. From the Edinburgh Room of the Tower Geddes gathered the material for the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1910 in London, which opened the way to the period of his greatest influence.

Geddes' threat to leave Edinburgh for London in search of financial support for the Tower was in no way abandoned when support was in fact forthcoming. The rescue of the Tower was not his only financial problem, and he spent more time in London just in order to earn a living, as in his lecturing at the University of London and the Horniman Museum. But intellectual stimulus beckoned him also: the Sociological Society (aided with the cash of the faithful Branford) attracted him as did the opportunity to develop a kulturstadt in Chelsea in parallel to that of Old Edinburgh. This notion had been occasioned by the campaign to save Sir Thomas More's house from destruction in 1908. Although Geddes could not prevent the house from being taken down the systematically numbered building material was carefully preserved till a site was found in Chelsea.

It was rebuilt as Crosby Hall, a student hall of residence for the University. The incipient cycle repeating his work in Edinburgh was thus restarted by Geddes at this period in Chelsea, and is testimony to his disillusionment with the Northern Capital.

Although the Tower was left behind in Edinburgh in the hands of Tower Committee and Outlook Tower Association, the Tower never became a popular source of educational and cultural renewal in Edinburgh as Geddes had intended and dreamed. The members of the

Association were essentially a small middle-class group, who rarely numbered more than a hundred. There was of course a much smaller core of very active members and office-bearers. It was a social club as much as an intellectual centre and activities included the usual sprinkling of lectures on Geddesian themes, At Homes and soirees.

Although the Tower as an intellectual and educational centre was basically an extension of Geddes' own interests and activities there was some serious work done on the survey of Edinburgh that surfaced in the important 1910 Exhibition, and more substantially in the work of the Open Spaces Committee of the Tower.

The Fifth Annual Report of the Tower Open Spaces Committee indicated the substantial achievements of the Committee. 'Unsightly bits of waste ground' in and around the Old Town and the Grassmarket were obtained 'at a nominal rent' and were transformed as recreation grounds for the children of the neighbourhood. In the five years prior to the Report nine gardens had been developed: the White Hart and the King's Wall Gardens in Castle Wynd; St. Johns Garden in Anderson Close off Victoria Street; Portsburgh Garden in the West Port, and the Little Portsburgh Garden opposite; the Heriot Bridge Garden in the Grassmarket; Greyfriar's Garden in Candlemaker



Row; the Outlook Tower Garden on Castlehill; and the Chessel's Court Garden in the Canongate.

Grown-ups and parents were encouraged to use the gardens and help supplement the volunteer supervisors on most afternoons in Spring, Summer and Autumn. The appeals for donations of plants, materials and money were the most successful of all the Tower's activities and there was substantial support throughout the city. That the gardens were very popular with the children is well-instanced by the case of the main Portsburgh Garden, where the 1913 Report indicated 130 children regularly came to the garden. It was so successful that a system of tickets of admission had to be devised and the superintendent had been able to devolve some of the management on to a small committee of the enthusiastic children. At the King's Wall Garden below Johnston Terrace it was reported that 'there was a good attendance of children of all ages' and that the tenants of 5 and 7 Castle Wynd used the garden and the children of nearby Italian Colony often played there.

In the months of August and September when many of the Committee's helpers were away on holiday a play-school was organised by Mabel Barker with volunteer students and teachers coming from England. The Geddeses made their flat available as accommodation and some

expenses were paid by the Edinburgh Play-Centres Society with whom the Committee co-operated. Some five English teachers were on duty each week and were aided by local volunteers. The School Board put the North Canongate School at their disposal and in the gardens some 250 children a day were taught organised games, as well as singing, gardening and story telling. Visits were made to the Outlook Tower, the Zoo and Arthur's Seat.

3) 1914-1932 - the Outlook Tower without P.G.

Although Geddes and the Outlook Tower survived the financial and organisational crisis of 1905, the real dynamism of the 1890's when the Tower had a less-finished ambience, was never regained. The Tower had then been part of a wider and more diverse community and cultural innovation with activities like the renewal of the Old Town, the Summer Schools and the development of University Hall. Some of the success of Geddes' 1910 London Exhibition temporarily rubbed off to the advantage of the Edinburgh Tower but the sense of excitement, commitment and experimentation was never the same. War duties in 1914 severely depleted the membership of many of the most active workers in the Tower. Geddes' reputation carried him to wider fields in London, Dublin, India and Jerusalem and finally to

an attempt to recreate the Latin Quarter of the Lawnmarket in his Scots College in Montpellier. Geddes' enhanced reputation did not bring in any increased investment for the Tower and without his presence till his death in 1932 the Tower was only a shadow of his great ambitions and hopes.

The emerging form and future possibilities of the Tower can be gleaned from the Sketch Plan for a Civic Museum for London reproduced in the Appendix at the end of this Chapter. This outline sketch was prepared by a certain Huntley Carter as an appendix to a paper on Civic Museums given by Geddes to the Sociological Society in 1904. As on this occasion a once and only amanuensis for Geddes, Carter faithfully reproduces his ideas for an index museum - Outlook Tower, with the additional advantage of a succinctness which is not usually found in Geddes' prose. Although the rampant inflation of Geddes' intellect is present here as usual with its familiar lack of control ('Thus above the cosmical sections should be diagrams showing the chemical and mechanical effect of heat, light, air etc., growth, beauty and curative effects, and the reverse, and suggesting to the ordinary human being, both the conditions under which he lives and those under which he ought to live) the outline of what he called a Civics

laboratory, centre of theory and practice concerning the modern city, are clearly discernible. Of course we have to take the legacy of Geddes' ideas, unfinished as they were, as he bequeathed them to us, but here surely is a glimpse of an intellectual contribution of real weight and relevance to the modern world.

## Footnotes

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- (3) Bertrand Faure: 'Le Professeur Geddes et Son Outlook Tower', in Revue Politique et Parlementaire, Paris, 10 April 1910, P. 3.

I am grateful to my colleague Philip McGhee for the translation into English.

- (4) A First Visit to the Outlook Tower, Edinburgh, Geddes and Colleagues, 1906, P. 9.
- (5) ibid. P. 10.
- (6) ibid.
- (7) ibid. P. 17.
- (8) ibid. P. 18.
- (9) ibid. P. 19.
- (10) Mumford, L. 'Who is Patrick Geddes?' in preface to Defries, Amelia, The Interpreter Geddes the Man of his Gospel, Routledge, London, 1927, P. 6.
- (11) Thomas B. Whitson to Edward McGegan, 27 September 1933, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10601.
- (12) John Ross to Edward McGegan, 17 October 1933, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10601.
- (13) P.G. to Prof. Wilson, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (14) P.G. to Coit, 6 August 1904, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (15) P.G. to William James, 2 April 1903, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (16) P.G. to Dr. Paton, 7 February 1905, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (17) P.G. to Chairman of Outlook Tower Committee, 12 May 1905, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (18) P.G. to Paton, ibid.
- (19) ibid.
- (20) ibid.

- (21) T.R. Marr to P.G., 6th March 1901, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10566.
- (22) T.R. Marr to P.G., 23 July 1902, University of Strathclyde, Geddes Papers T/Ged. 9/38.
- (23) T.B. Whitson to P.G., 14 August 1903, University of Strathclyde, Geddes Papers T/Ged. 9/497.
- (24) ibid.
- (25) P.G. to Lady Welby, 22 October 1904, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10566.
- (26) P. Geddes, 'Note for a Draft Plan for Institute of Geography', Scottish Geographical Magazine, No. 3, Vol. XVIII March 1902.
- (27) ibid.
- (28) G.S. Dunbar, 'Elisee Reclus and the Great Globe', Scottish Geographical Magazine, April, 1974, P. 61.
- (29) A.J. Herbertson to P.G., Edinburgh, 28 June 1896, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10528.
- (30) ibid.
- (31) Interview with Arthur by Philip Boardman, 1 March 1968, in Boardman, P. 231.
- (32) P.G. to Rector Marshall, 24 March 1903, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (33) P.G. to Charles Booth, 2 April 1903, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (34) P.G. to Lord Reay, 6 April 1903, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (35) P.G. to William James, 2 April 1903, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (36) P.G. to Prof. Zueblin, 2 April 1903, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (37) P.G. to Dr. Tolman, 9 April 1903, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (38) P.G. to Lady Welby, 22 October 1904, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (39) P.G. to Dr. Paton, 7 February 1905, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (40) P.G. to Chairman of the Outlook Tower Committee, 12 May 1905, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.

- (41) ibid.
- (42) ibid.
- (43) Boardman : P. 211.
- (44) P.G. to Lectureship Committee, MS 10511, N.L.S. Geddes Papers 10511.
- (45) P.G. to Ross, Branford & Co., April 1 1903, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (46) Boardman : P. 211.
- (47) John Kelman : The Interpreter's house. An exposition of the ideals embodied in the Outlook Tower, Edinburgh 1905, pp. 33-34.
- (48) P.G. to Chairman of Outlook Tower Committee, 14 June 1905, N.L.S. Geddes Papers MS 10511.
- (49) Report of the Finance Committee, University of Strathclyde, Geddes Papers T./Ged 7/6/9.
- (50) Minutes of Meeting of General Committee of the Outlook Tower, 30 January 1906, University of Strathclyde, Geddes Papers T./Ged 7/6/22.



## **APPENDIX**

### **SKETCH PLAN FOR A CIVIC MUSEUM FOR LONDON.**

FROM MR. HUNTLY CARTER.

To the close observer there is very noticeable just now a strong public curiosity in all forms of municipal government and enterprise, and those domestic, economic and social institutions which embody communitary life. No thinker can perceive this without pondering the question whether such curiosity does not arise from a real desire to understand the city, to become familiar with the municipal way of thinking. To foster this civic consciousness and make it of practical value it would seem necessary so to survey the field of civic thought and action, as to comprehend, direct and control its movements.

#### **I. AIMS.**

Any such observational arrangement should be:-

I. COMPREHENSIVE.-It should be a summary of all the known particulars of the structure and composition of the City; an epitome of the whole phenomena of population and environment in their leading aspects-Geographical, Historical, Economic, Cultural; and a visual presentment of these phenomena, in order of their organic and historic evolution; of present time, place, work and people; of future development.

2. LIVING.-It should allow of facts and documents relating to the same civic phenomena being so organised that everything is kept in its proper place, proportions and relations, thus stimulating reflection, creating new lines of research, and adding suggestion and impulse to the growth of special ideas.

3. HANDY.-It should admit of its material being easily accessible to all.

Any such observational arrangement should serve two principal functions:-

1. SEEING.-Properly adapted as a centre of vision, it should form the plan of a much needed civic observatory for the training of the citizen to a proper knowledge and appreciation of his own City and for the guidance of the visitor to its sights and institutions. As such, it should be: (a) a Tower affording a concrete view of the city and its surroundings, and (b) a Municipal Gallery affording a reconstruction in minute detail of the same concrete view of place, work and people by means of models, maps, pictures, diagrams, bibliographies, indices, etc., enabling citizen and visitor alike to obtain a clear idea of the city, its region, its relations to the world both from the point of geography and history.

2. DOING.- Properly adapted as a centre of activity, it should constitute the plan of a much needed civic laboratory, available alike to thinker and worker, in which the whole work-the life, in short-of the city should be represented, all reasonable civic ideals, utilitarian and aesthetic, hygienic and educational, governmental and moral especially expressed. As such it should be:-

(a) AN INDEX MUSEUM (forming a complete guide and index to all other city museums and similar institutions) for organising and indexing the large masses of unorganised civic facts, so arranged as to present these facts in their various aspects: physical facts correlated with occupational, occupational with social, etc. This would enable the inquirer, whether working specialist or business man, to discover and interpret the relations between one set of phenomena and another, yet offering a classification in any division readily intelligible to the ordinary average man, so that stranger and citizen alike may be completely informed as to the city's resources.

(b) A BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL INFORMATION, expanding later to a National and International Centre for the exchange of views, results, etc., by those engaged in trade, commerce, or municipal enterprise. As such, offering to the manufacturer, enquirer and merchant information about industries, commerce, countries, etc. To the legislator the latest and most reliable facts about the city resources, and those departments of local administration over which perhaps serious disputes might arise.

Suggesting to men of large fortunes such lines of hygienic philanthropy as the development of the suburb, the design of houses, the forming of roads, garden space, and other visible and palpable suggestions for city and suburban betterment; and by presenting a view of the whole enabling them to see that any legacy would be wisely used for the betterment of city or people on some permanent, well considered system. Thus bringing leaders of every class of municipal enterprise into a common line of thought and action, and forming, as it were, a clearing-house and centre of all that is most intelligent and progressive in the city's commerce.

(c) A TEACHING CENTRE for practical educational work. Presenting the history of the city as setting forth those simple geographical, occupational, racial, governmental, ecclesiastical and other conditions which determined the city at its origin, and the various changes in these which have from time to time so deeply modified its development, material and other, that its present may be seen and understood as a development of the past, its future as a development of the present. Dealing with the study of types and stocks that are peculiar to London, that have made its history and are now continuing it. Embracing a School of Research for enlarging the boundaries of historical and topographical knowledge; a School of Social Service, for educating the people in the beginnings of social service; a School of Hygiene, devoted to the municipalisation of health, educating the citizen in the prevention of disease in the workshop, in the home,

throughout all the actions of life. Affording a key to art galleries and museums and public parks, and providing a much needed mental direction. In a word, constituting a great co-operating educational factor, supplementing rather through the eye than the ear the work of school, library and museum, thus tending to the increase of the city's educative and civilising resources in every form.

(d) A THOUGHT EXCHANGE, or intellectual centre, forming a meeting ground of thinkers and reformers, where the solution of the great modern administrative and social problems-all the schemes of civic and eugenic improvement-could be actually commenced. Offering the astronomer, meteorologist, geographer, geologist, biologist, anthropologist, all available information as to the sky, climate, scenery, geological structure, productions, people, etc.; the lawyer, doctor, statesman, painter, sculptor and dramatist, all that is available on human institutions. Affording specialists the needed contacts, and thus aiding the growth of a unifying spirit.

(e) AN ACADEMY OF CIVIC ART, suggesting how every place within the city's limit might be made as beautiful as its character and the available means rendered possible. Suggesting lines of artistic philanthropy, such as the improvement of city areas, the general beautifying of centres, erection of free libraries, picture galleries, etc. Directing co-operation with the municipal

authorities, in outlining artistic buildings, the laying out of recreation grounds and parks, the widening of streets, the preservation of old buildings, etc. Stimulating public interest in artistic horticulture, gardening etc., by offering prizes for the best methods of planting streets with trees, shrubs, etc. Offering a field of original usefulness and inspiration to isolated art students, and thus adding a much needed social sympathy and insight to the artistic life. In short, devoted to the preservation of the city's historic memorials and the development of its beauty.

(f) AN OFFICE FOR SUGGESTIONS, where those interested in town improvements may make suggestions and report to the committees, thus stimulating valuable contributions from the unofficial to the official part of the city.

The aims of the Civic Museum being thus ascertained as the complete study of the city through every avenue of illustration, and the organisation of city facts for the use both of the student and the man of affairs, the plan of the structure itself would be as follows.

## II. STRUCTURE.

In order to serve fully these functions of vision and action a building should be designed with a central tower of regional survey, a lecture theatre and congress hall and with rooms devoted to special civic aspects. Thus there

would be rooms showing the relation of London to England, to the Empire, to Europe, etc. As the purpose of this building developed, it would doubtless be found necessary to make extensions and to erect and endow district branches, each contributing information, etc., to the central museum.

Supposing, however, the impossibility of the present erection of such a building generously endowed by means of municipal enterprise and enlightened and far-seeing philanthropy, a first attempt at a Museum could be made as follows:

A large, lofty hall would be secured in as central and elevated a position as possible. Its roof, or a parapet surrounding it, equipped with orientational table, etc., would provide the City view. Its interior arranged on the lines of the whole city, would be both an analysis and synthesis of this same view. It would be a visual presentation of the whole phenomena of population and environment, surveyed in the past, criticised in the present, and projected in the future. The ceiling should form a celestial globe, presenting the phenomena of sun, moon, the planets, stars, their system, etc., and around this should be placed a gallery for astronomical maps, charts, instruments and records, and meteorological resources presenting the phenomena of atmosphere, -its constitution, temperature, pressure, distribution, movement, and electrical and optical phenomena, as affecting life in London and as compared with other cities.

Below this a frieze giving the geological key, illustrating geological formation, etc., and gallery for resources of geology. Below this, running round the entire room the geographical key, being a visual presentation of the Thames basin, by means of plans, charts, drawings, photographs, etc., with the open districts marked in color, suggesting reclamation of waste and poisonous lands, improvement of soil and climate by afforestation, etc., and having a gallery for models, instruments, etc. Below this a topographical gallery showing London buildings from the earliest to the latest period, from the Londinium hut to the newest steel-framed hotel, the resources here being engravings, prints and pictures, photographs and photographic surveys of old buildings and sections and plans of new, suggesting lines of improvement and preservation of historic buildings. Below this again, a long historic chart in which the varying fortunes of London are shown in broadening and narrowing lines of color, like those in Strauss's Rivers of History, and displaying the relation of Civic history to the main-stream of cultural history. In arranging each section an attempt should be made to effect not only a unity of, but an evolutionary presentation, that is of prehistoric and earliest beginnings and of latest developments, thus passing from the static to the kinetic view. As with the plans of Mr. Kiralfy's scheme to improve the East End of London where we find placed side by side charts of the old, the transitional, and the future conditions. Beneath the historical chart sets of Bureaus, wherein all bibliographical material may be so organised, that even the



ordinary individual could have at his disposal the remotest of civic facts, and a guide to all such literature as the city contains. Material thus handled would fall under the three main divisions of (a) Place, (b) Work, (c) People, or in the terms of biology, Environment, Function, Organism.

(a) Under Place would go all the physical or environmental facts in their order: Cosmical, light, temperature, climate, etc.; Geological, structure, minerals, soils, etc.; Geographical, physiography of City; Botanical, vegetation, etc.; Zoology, animals, birds, etc., belonging to London, and known to breed in London Parks, open spaces, etc. Under Botany and Zoology would be included all Natural History Collections, such as the Horniman and South Kensington Museums, the Zoological and Kew Gardens, for the use and guidance of visitors, nature student and artist, a space being allowed to pathological botany.

(b) Under work, all the occupational or functional facts, everything concerning the trades and professions of London, with space for pathology peculiar to London occupations.

(c) Under people, all the social or organismal facts, racial origins, social conditions, etc., with space for pathology peculiar to London. By a further division of Time each group of facts would be presented in its threefold aspects of Past, Present and Future; or

phenomena relating to the past evolution, organic and historic; present phenomena in actual time, place and work; future or eutopian schemes and incipient efforts towards their realisation.

As a means of reference all other literature contained in the City should be organised and indexed on the same plan, in separate divisions of the bureaux. The contents of each Bureau should be illustrated, (a) by a revolving panorama, a procession in simple outline of the earliest to the latest forms or diagrammatically. Thus above the cosmical sections should be diagrams showing the chemical and mechanical effect of heat, light, air, etc., i.e., growth, beauty and curative effects, and the reverse, and suggesting to the ordinary human being, both the conditions under which he lives and those under which he ought to live. Above Botany, local vegetation; above Zoology, local animals, etc; above Occupations a procession of the Guilds; above People, a procession of the peoples of London. (b) By revolving picture cases giving an analytical treatment, or a concrete presentation. Thus in Occupations, examples of arts and crafts-textile fabrics, etc.

Below the Bureaux, spaces for indexed scrap-books for cuttings and indexed scrap-books for photographs, etc. In the centre of the floor a relief model of London similar to that at Jermyn Street Museum. At the entrance an index board giving the general arrangement of the hall.

The collecting and indexing of materials could be accomplished in several possible ways, by paid labour, voluntary service, social clubs, etc., to be determined by committee and means.

### III. APPLICATION.

#### PRELIMINARY STEPS TO ITS REALISATION.

Supposing even this modified plan unrealisable for the present, a beginning is yet possible. An attempt could then be made to construct a model of the foregoing, with a view to organising the movement into being and enlisting a body of founders.

For this purpose it would be necessary to have the temporary use of a suitable room. An amount to meet the necessary expense of organising. The voluntary services of "live" helpers and workers. The active assistance of the man of affairs and official bodies, their support in various ways, especially of contributions in kind. Thus from museums might come materials of all kinds towards constructing the full concept of the city; from the South Kensington Museum and London Photographic Society, civic sociology and actual-contemporary pictures; from the Charity Organisation Society, visible suggestions of city improvements; from Garden City Association, illustrated reports and proposals for local developments; from a sympathetic County Councillor, current proceedings of the Council and special reports of traffic, municipal and

administrative schemes; from the Press, digests of the day's, week's, month's, and year's news. In short, the help of all corporate bodies, societies and organisations, public and private, and various governmental boards concerned in civic and social endeavour, who thus through the agency of a presentation of their work and ideas in graphic form would be enabled to increase their contacts with each other and the public. So might a Civic Museum be formed, and the view-point provided for rousing in the citizen and-where roused-promoting a consciousness of whatever may and should be done to elevate the tone of city life.

Figure 24: Arbor Saeculorum.

Source: A First Visit to the Outlook Tower.

Figure 25: Lapis Philosophorum.

Source: A First Visit to the Outlook Tower.

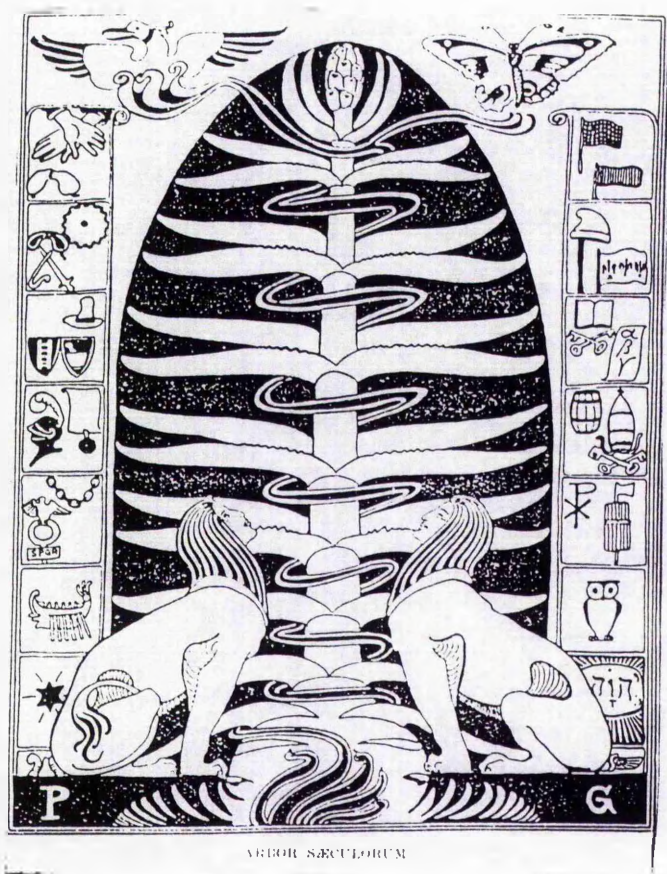


FIGURE 24



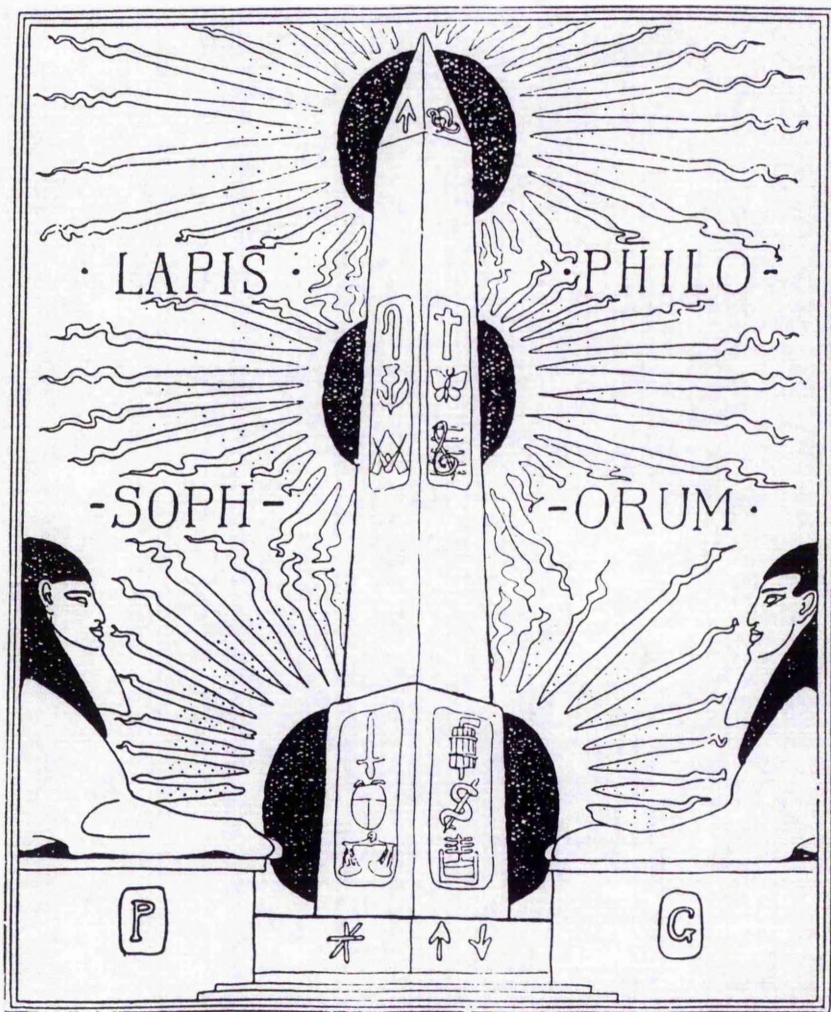


FIGURE 25

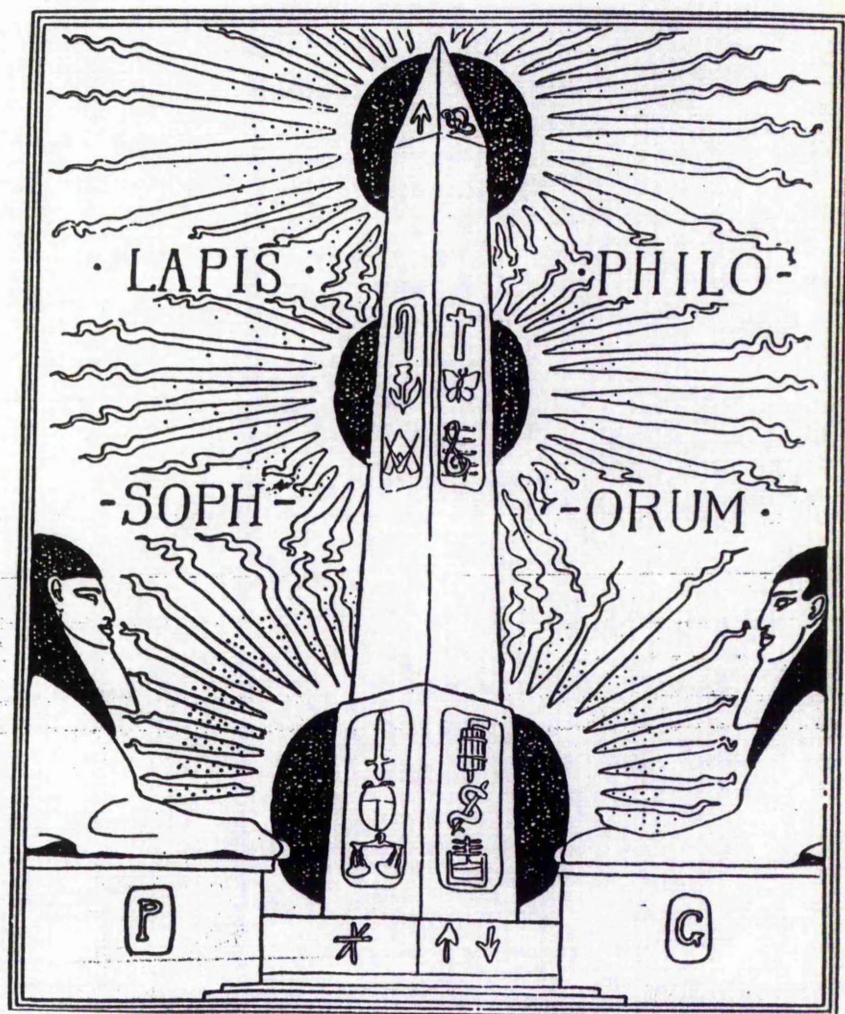


Figure 25:



## APPENDIX

### 'Lapis Philosophorum'

On the panel to the right of the Door is the Lapis Philosophorum, an obelisk whereon is outlined in graphic notation a classification of the Arts and Sciences. Here, again, we have an attempt to recall the student or the man of action to a view of the unity and mutual relations of the various departments of thought and life upon which as physicist or chemist, geologist or naturalist, historian or economist, or, again, as artist or physician, lawyer or churchman he may have been specialising. It is, indeed, a diagram summarising in graphic shorthand, so to speak, the idea already put before us in the 'Outlooks of the Sciences' from the Terrace Roof, representative of the physical, biological, and social aspects of thought and action.

Beginning at the left-hand side, and reading from below upwards, we have first the Scales to denote the physical sciences (astronomy, chemistry, etc.), these all being dependent upon exactitude. The Scarabaeus (the sacred beetle) symbolises Biology, the science of Life, though with the specialist this may at times be narrowed down to mere beetle-collecting. Next, the Sword is used as a symbol of history, of economic theory also, with its doctrines of competition and struggle for existence. These three main divisions of science, physical, biological, and social, have, of course, endless subdivisions. /

To the right, opposite the Scales, are the Telegraph Wires and the Steam-Engine, representing the corresponding Mechanical Arts which are based upon Physical Science, and on which so much of our civilisation is built up. Above this, and opposite the Scarabaeus, is the Rod of Aesculapius, denoting Medicine and Hygiene, the arts arising out of the Science of Biology; while above this again are the Axe and Fasces of the Roman Lictor, the representative of Law, of the power of the State. (The two upper divisions of the diagram have, by a mistake of the draughtsman, been transposed. The right hand division, representing Science or Theory, ought therefore to be at the left side over the Sword, Scarabaeus, and Scales of the lower division, while the Crook, etc., representing Art or Action, should be on the right side, corresponding to the Axe and Fasces below.)

Beginning at the right-hand side of the upper division, we have the musical staff, suggestive of the general idea of notation, and symbolising the theory of Aesthetics, which underlies all Fine Art. This is represented on the opposite side by the compass and square of the Architect, Architecture being not only 'frozen Music' but the most synthetic of the Fine Arts, since it combines with itself sculpture and painting.

Next comes the Butterfly, the Psyche, representing Psychology, the subjective aspect of the Science of Life. Opposite it the Flower, from which the butterfly derives its sustenance, indicates the art of Education, whose

function it is to provide fit nourishment for the growing child soul, and which is (or ought to be) based on a true Psychology. In the uppermost division the Celtic Cross with its sun-circle (at once a cosmic and a human symbol) stands for Ethics; for must not a complete science of Ethics take account of our relation to the cosmos as well as to humanity? On the opposite side again the pastoral Crook is chosen as representing the spiritual guidance of the Church, a gentler force than that of Law with its Axe and Fasces.

Below the Scales is the sign of the three dimensions of space or the symbol of Mathematics which, with Logic (indicated by the swirl above the Cross), may be looked upon as the general method of science running, therefore, through all the sciences. The Arrows pointing upwards and downwards suggest two opposite ideals or modes of action; the one, which would use knowledge and power primarily for the sake of increasing material wealth, making the fundamental dominate the supreme; the other, which holds that all material well-being should be subservient to and for the sake of right conduct, right ideals. In the one case, to use Emerson's phrase, 'things are in the saddle and ride mankind'; in the other Science and Art are the highest blossoming of the Arbor Saeculorum, the flowering and fruiting of the Tree of Life.

### (Arbor Saeculorum)

Still further down the stair is another stained-glass window. A great tree rises through the middle, and its branches, spreading right and left, suggest the twofold aspects of each historic era, temporal on one side, spiritual on the other.

The tree has its roots amid the fires of life, and is perpetually renewed from them; but the spirals of smoke which curl among its branches blind the thinkers and workers of each successive age to the thought and work of their precursors.

While the branches symbolise the past and passing developments of society, the bud at the tree-top suggests the hope of the opening future.

Two sphinxes guard the tree and gaze upward in eternal questioning; their lion-bodies recalling man's origin in the animal world, their human faces the ascent of man.

Issuing from the smoke-wreaths at the top of the tree are the phoenix of the ever-renewed body, and the butterfly (Psyche) of the deathless soul of humanity.

On either side of the window rises a series of symbols, those on the right hand indicating the dominating spiritual forces of the great historic periods, those on the left the corresponding temporal powers.

Thus, at the bottom, we find on the right the ringed orb, from the Book of the Dead of the Egyptians; on the left a lotus-blossom, an ancient symbol of their right and majesty, and a hand suggesting the myriad hands that built the immemorial Pyramids.

At the next level, on the right, is the Hebrew sign for the 'Ineffable Name', that marvellous conception of the Unity behind phenomena which gave to the Hebrew race its spiritual elevation and intensity; on the left King Solomon's seal, to represent its material apogee.

Above these, on the right, the bird of Pallas symbolises Greek wisdom and Greek ideals; on the left the flying galley recalls the essentially maritime character of the Greek empire and civilisation.

Next we have, on the right, the rods and axe of the Roman lictors, emblems of the majesty of Roman law, and also the Sacred Monogram from the catacombs, indicating the rise of the new spiritual power; while on the left we have the Eagle of Rome's world-dominion, and the chain of her slaves (from whom Christianity spread to Rome), who were so strangely to transform her might.

On the next level above we have, on the one hand, the triple crown of the Popes, and the keys of Heaven and Hell, which they claimed to hold in their hands; while on the

other the wine-barrel typifies the degeneration of civic life; on the left, the temporal side, we have the casque of the feudal barons, and the charter of the great free cities that defied them.

But in the next age the symbols remind us that the revival of Greek letters was the prelude to the Reformation, and by it the power of the keys of Heaven and Hell was transferred from the popes to the Book; while the 'powers and principalities' of the Renaissance (symbolised by the cognizances of the great Scaliger and Medici families) were in turn dominated by the sombre influence of the Puritan; on the temporal side we see the sword and crook, the state and church, both under the increasing domination of the wealth of the new industrialism, whose emblem is the cogged wheel of its machinery.

But, above the cap of Liberty, we find the red flag of Socialism, the black flag of Anarchism, symbolising contrasted tendencies which we have in our midst even now; and, corresponding to these, the symbol of the enormous increase of wealth, yet also of empty hands.

Last of all, on either side, we find a query - the eternal question of the Sphinxes for ever reiterated, for ever unanswered; yet above these an opening bud, a flower as yet undefined.

## Chapter 5

### The Scottish Context of Geddes' Ideas

Salience was the essential determinant of the Outlook Tower. From outlooks on high inter-relations are apparent, unities perceptible. 'One might do something with an Outlook Tower on one of these pedestals', Geddes wrote to his wife in 1899 of the skyscrapers in New York. (1) There were parallel opportunities in Boston he advised an audience in a lecture at the Normal School there, (2) and in 1905 he was enquiring about the possibilities of an Outlook Tower in an upper storey of the high buildings beginning to develop in London. (3) In contrast, the diminutive but nevertheless in Geddes' scheme, brave, Dunfermline there were proposed the Tower of the Reformation, the Tower of Renaissance Learning, the Stair Spiral of Evolution (after Leonardo da Vinci's Spiral Stairs) and finally the Tower of Outlook which was 'transitional to the twentieth century'. From 'the spacious open gallery' of this latter circular tower 'we may look back to the old historic city and forward into its future'. (4) In his Report to the Durbar of Indore Geddes was happy to accept the Maharaja's advice to locate the 'commanding group' of educational and cultural buildings 'upon the high point of the Ghatia Peninsula'. (5) In the South of France Geddes built an Outlook Tower on the villa roof he acquired for his Scots College and 250 miles distant at Domme in the Dordogne he converted a



rural windmill into an Outlook Tower, whose existence and good repair Arthur Geddes struggled to maintain after the Second World War.

Wherever Geddes planned or actually built towers he invariably referred to the Outlooks of the Arts and Sciences in the top storey. The interest in synthesising - he called his Montpellier College a school of **synthetics** - the interest in the unity of the natural and human world, of generalisation before specialisation, placed him centrally in that Scottish intellectual tradition that George Elder Davie has identified as the democratic intellect. In Geddes' time this tradition was coming under severe pressure, the turning point of which for Davie was the 1889 Royal Commission on Universities and the subsequent downward spiral into Anglicisation as a result of legislation in 1892. There is no question that Geddes subscribed to what Davie called 'the old idea inherited from the Scottish Enlightenment, that specialisation stultifies, in the sense of slowing down learning and liveliness of mind, whereas generalism, that is studying a broad group of different subjects, enlivens the intelligence, and increases the amount learned by comparison with single-subject study, because each discipline throws light on the others'. (6) Geddes would have delightedly accepted William Cobbet's criticism that

the Scots believed in improving the condition of the working class with bacon in the upper case than the lower, just as he would have found no asperity in the description 'meta physical Scotland'. He was proud of the Scottish tradition of cultivating the muse on a little oatmeal and he believed the University life was one of 'high ideals and plain living'.

The climax of the struggle over Scottish education Davie saw in the decade 1917 to 1927, and paralleled, he thought, in scale and impact the Disruption crisis of 1833-43. (7) Geddes' life and work spanned this crisis. His father was an elder of the Free Kirk and Geddes' ambitions and effort were committed to a renewal and recovery of Scottish education at all levels.

In the efforts to defend Scottish education in the final struggle before the denouement of the First World War, Davie has identified two forms of response. 'The tendency of Scottish Universities to turn into Degree factories for the production of subaltern talents' for Empire was resisted by the professoriate, taking their example from Edinburgh, who:

'sought a solution by dividing the work of their departments into two separate halves, lowering their sights in the ordinary classes to comply with the pedestrian roles imposed by the S.E.D.'s unimaginative exam system and in compensation finding their intellectual stimulus in teaching their Honours Classes to look beyond Scotland to the standards set by the great and ancient universities of the South, the function of which was to train an all-British elite for the twentieth century'. (8)

The second response Davie identified was that exemplified by John Burnet, the Professor of Greek at St. Andrews and Christopher Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid), who were 'though in different ways', 'protagonists of the idea of a Scottish renaissance'. (9)

Both Burnet and Grieve 'sought to defeat the deadening hand of the S.E.D. by developing a distinctively national culture' in which 'the bread and butter studies required for the teachers in the schools would get their elevation and ideals from ... an intellectual culture aimed at producing in Scotland an elite capable of functioning in the international scene without disidentifying themselves from the country's cultural heritage'. (10) Grieve's scheme which was set out in his Contemporary Scottish Studies

and serialised in the school teachers' Scottish Education Journal, was the adaptation of a type of pedagogy 'in which the culture was to be centred in the country's literature taken in a sufficiently broad sense to include not only work in the various languages native to the country, but also the intellectual writing of the country - philosophy, economics, the sciences side by side with poetry and fiction'. (11) Burnet's plan 'sought to reinstate the cultural pattern very familiar to Scots since the Union', and was 'more intellectual, in the older Scottish sense, than Grieve's policy', and it saw 'in a renaissance of the philosophical spirit taken in a broad sense the appropriate means of combatting the rigid vocationalism of the S.E.D. and thereby making possible a return to a truly national system - in a post-Union sense - which didn't extrude the elite, but found a place for them side by side with the other'. (12)

Geddes was quite clearly a third 'protagonist' of 'the idea of a Scottish renaissance' in extension of the two responses of Burnet and Grieve outlined by Davie. In the crisis of the Outlook Tower in 1905 Geddes wrote to the Chairman of the Tower Committee that he saw their work there as 'the renewal of the intellectual life of old Edinburgh'. (13) Grieve as Hugh MacDiarmid in The Scottish Chapbook in August

1922 concurred with the critic who remarked that 'no attempt at renaissance has ever been better equipped than that undertaken in the Lawnmarket of Edinburgh by Patrick Geddes and Colleagues'. In the Evergreen Geddes himself referred to the cultural renewal in Old Edinburgh as a 'Scottish Renaissance' and Grieve was happy to appropriate the description at the instigation of the French critic Denis Saurat in the efflorescence of Scottish literature in the 1920's.

The nature of the 'Scottish Renaissance' that Geddes had in mind is clearly spelled out in the Preface to the Autumn volume of The Evergreen published by Geddes in 1895. Allan Ramsay was inspiration and precedent. Geddes named the magnificent complex of apartments and student residences on Castlehill after him, as Ramsay Gardens, and he incorporated Ramsay's old home, Goosepie House, into the design. The Evergreen Ramsay published in 1724 was the direct inspiration for Geddes' four volume version of the same name in the 1890's because, Geddes explained, he wanted to follow Ramsay's precedent of stimulating 'the return to local and national tradition'. (14) More particularly, Geddes went on, 'we would like to express the larger view of Edinburgh as not only a National and Imperial, but a European city - the larger view of Scotland, again as in recent, in mediæval, most of all in ancient times, one of

the European Powers of Culture'. (15)

Edinburgh for Geddes was 'among the outwardly beautiful and inwardly cultured cities of the world'. (16) In a letter to T.R.R. Marr, Edinburgh was this 'great Northern citadel of culture', (17) and his great desire he wrote to Frank Hears in another letter was 'that of planning the culture-future of Edinburgh as a nascent capital'. (18) In viewing Edinburgh as the heartland of Scottish culture and intellect, especially as it related to the Universities, Geddes was placing himself squarely in a major Scottish tradition that went back to the eighteenth century.

The locus classicus of this tradition was in the work of Lord Cockburn, who was quite clear that 'the society of Edinburgh was not that of a provincial town, and cannot be judged of by any such standard. It was metropolitan'. (19) There were two definitions that Cockburn had of Edinburgh and the attraction it engendered. The first was that it was one of the 'great little places'. (20) Distance had preserved 'its style and habits', and 'it had then its own independent tastes, ideas, and pursuits'. The second was that it was a 'City of Refuge', (21) by which he meant a city without industrial dirt and smoke and a surly and threatening proletariat.

These two characteristics determined the peculiar nature of Edinburgh and its special place in the intellectual life of Scotland. As Karl Miller has commented: 'In Cockburn's reminiscences and letters, Edinburgh is bathed in a Mediterranean, an Attic light. It is an intellectual city, and a convivial one'. (22) The golden age for which Cockburn was nostalgic was that prior to the building of the New Town but his definition is the essential reference point ever since of the peculiar status of a city which was 'half metropolis, half country town'. Edinburgh's interest as a 'great little place' was firstly that it had 'not begun to be absorbed in the ocean of London', (23) and that it had the patina and functional remnants of a former capital. These interests Cockburn wrote were:

'Chiefly some traces, the more interesting that they are faded, of the Ancient Royalty and national independence of Scotland, and of a once resident nobility; - the seat of the Supreme Courts of Justice; - a College of still maintained celebrity; and our having supplied a greater number of eminent men to literature, to science, and to the arts, than any one town in the empire, with the single exception of London'. (24)

As a twilight capital Edinburgh was an important memorial to former Scottish statehood and continuing Scottish nationhood: 'anything is surely to be lamented', he averred, 'which annihilates local intellect, and degrades the provincial spheres which intellect and its consequences can alone adorn'. (25)

The conjunction of former 'traces, the more interesting that they are faded' of ancient nationhood and the functional remnants of a capital city were no small matters, no mere sighing of antiquarianism, for they were the essential theatre, the hotbed of genius, of Scotland's great Enlightenment. Edinburgh was a place 'with attractions quite sufficient to retain men of talent or learning in their comfortable and respectable provincial positions; and which (was) dignified by the tastes and institutions which learning and talent naturally rear'. (26) Of the institutions essential to the nurture of the city's talent was the University, 'a college famous throughout the world; and from which the world has been supplied with many distinguished men who have shone in it'; and the Bar, 'to which Edinburgh has always been so largely indebted', and which 'sent its copious supplies' of intellect into the life of the city. (27) The social composition of the city -



'All our nobility had not then fled' - was an essential source of patronage and natural support for intellectual and cultural life, and this was considerably reinforced (despite Cockburn's opposition to its aesthetics) by the development of the New Town. For, as in Lord Provost Drummond's original intention, the development of the New Town helped keep the remnants of the older aristocracy in the city and attract the families of the gentry from their country residences at least for part of the year. The result was, in Cockburn's words, that 'philosophy had become indigenous in the place, and all classes, even in their gayest hours, were proud of the presence of its cultivators. Thus learning was improved by society, and society by learning'. (28)

The greatest quality of Edinburgh for Cockburn, however, was its physical environment - 'Edinburgh has so much beauty, and depends so entirely upon it' (29):

'There is probably not one stranger out of each hundred of the many who visit us, who is attracted by anything but the beauty of the city and its vicinity.

It is not our lectures, nor our law, nor our intellectual reputation, that give us our particular fame. It is our curious and matchless position, - our strange irregularity of surface, - its picturesque results, - our internal features and scenery, - our distant prospects, - our varied, and ever-beautiful neighbourhood, - and the endless aspects of the city, as looked down upon from adjoining heights, or as it presents itself to the places below. Extinguish these, and the rest would leave it a very inferior place. Very respectable; but not what it is'. (30)

The obverse of the Romantic-Classical city of Cockburn's concern and delight was that it had no industry:

'Mercifully it has almost no manufacture ... Some strange efforts have occasionally been made to coax these things to us; but a thanks - deserving Providence has hitherto been always pleased to defeat them. For though manufacturers be indispensable, they need not be everywhere. Blight should be confined to as few parts of the field as possible. ... Hence the envy which it is said that Perth sometimes has of Dundee, is nearly inconceivable. One would have thought that there was no Perth man (out of the asylum) who would not have rejoiced in his unstained tranquility'. (31)

In educational and intellectual conditions the legacy of the eighteenth century Athens of the North was that of a city which possessed 'toutes les ressources d'une societe d'elite'. (32) James Lorimer, father of the great architectural contemporary of Geddes, Robert Lorimer, is instance, after Cockburn, of the continuing consciousness of Edinburgh's role of enhancing and renewing the national intellectual tradition. 'We do regard Edinburgh', he wrote in The Universities of Scotland, Past, Present and Possible 'as being in a very peculiar manner, a type of Scotland, and the capabilities and aspirations of its society as representing, very faithfully, those of the better class of our countrymen generally'. (33) He continued to see the Bar 'as the great intellectual club of the country' and that 'the pride with which an intelligent Edinburgh tradesman regards his native city, has quite as much to do with its former and present literary celebrity, as with other circumstances connected with it'. Edinburgh, Lorimer considered, still attracted persons of 'wealth and position' as in Cockburn's day. They came, he thought for three reasons: the beauty that Cockburn so eloquently celebrated; the good and cheap schools in the city and the 'prospect which Edinburgh society holds out of their being here able to gratify those refined and cultivated tastes which they may have elsewhere formed'. (34)

By the time Geddes came to stir up a cultural renewal in the Old Town in the 1890's, Edinburgh's intellectual tradition was an anaemic version of its former self. The Old Town, which had formerly housed the literati of the Enlightenment, had now decayed into one of the most wretched and overcrowded slums in Britain. London and Oxford and Cambridge had drawn off many of Scotland's leading lights in literature and science. Geddes' 'Scottish Renaissance', therefore, was an ambitious and comprehensive attempt to reconstruct a whole culture and environment in embryo. The Old Town, still preserved on its lofty ridge presented the opportunity.

Like Hugh MacDiarmid, who he puts us in mind of afterwards, Geddes was a great roller-up of sleeves, a great relisher of challenges. To the renewal of the city's intellectual and educational life and the restoration and conservation of the Old Town Geddes added the dimension of art. 'He recognised at once', art historian Ian Findlay has written,

'the artistic bankruptcy of the Capital, in which he had taken up his headquarters. With admirable intent, he tried to inject into the city some of his own all-embracing enthusiasm by making the colourful Ramsay Lodge that he built a meeting-

place for artists and writers, and by launching a new cultural review called, in memory of Allan Ramsay, The Evergreen. But as co-editor of The Evergreen he chose William Sharpe - "Fiona Macleod" - and as decorator of the walls of Ramsay Lodge he chose John Duncan'. (35)

Finlay concludes:

'The importance of Geddes in relation to Scottish art, and to art in general, is not his patronage or even in his essays in art criticism, but in this passionate belief of his in the need to maintain and develop the ancient roots of any society or community. His nationalism was the nationalism of Voltaire's il faut cultiver notre jardin. ... Geddes was to the great new art of city planning what Mackintosh was to architecture and the Glasgow School and McTaggart were to painting. Together those men constituted the first wave of a true renaissance in Scotland'. (36)

The urban cultural renaissance that Geddes worked for in Edinburgh was universalised and generalised in his formal technical concept of the Valley Section. This was, the Latin inscription had it on the stained glass window of the Outlook Tower: the microcosm of nature, the seat of man and the theatre of history. It

Figure 26: Valley Section with Typical Vegetation and  
Characteristic Regional Occupations.  
The Natural Occupations.  
Section Across Wales and the English Plain.

Source: Papers for the Present, No. 8.

Figure 27: Valley Section.

Source: Edinburgh College of Art.

Figure 28: Valley Section.

Source: University of Keele.

Figure 29: Valley Section.

Source: University of Keele.

Figure 30: Occupational Types: the Fisherman.

Source: University of Keele.

Figure 31: Birds Eye View of the Valley Region.

Source: University of Keele.

Figure 32: Occupational Types.

Source: University of Keele.

Figure 33: The Eastern Watershed of Scotland.

Source: University of Keele.

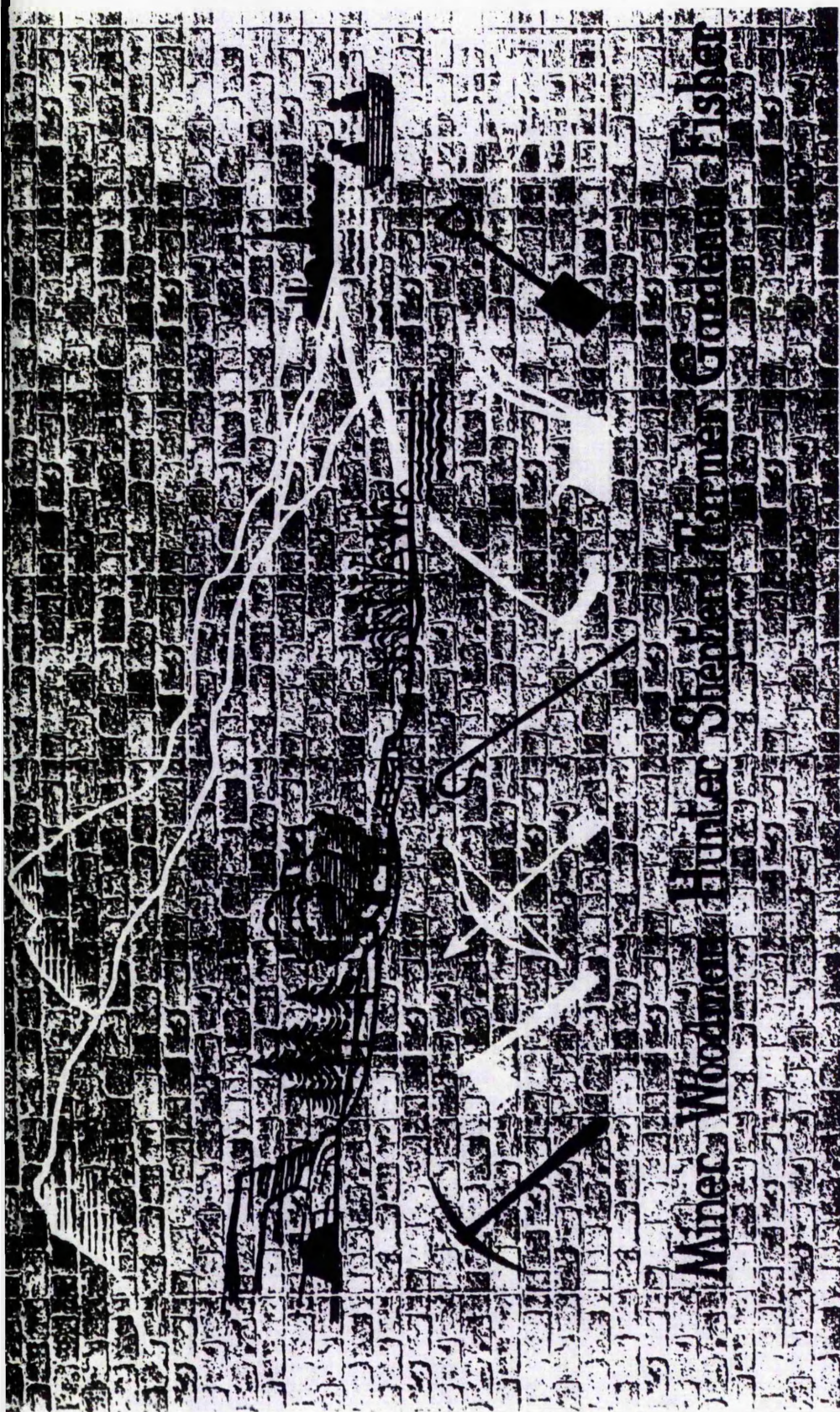
Figure 34: Thinking Machine: Evils Organic and Social.

Source: University of Strathclyde Archives.

Figure 35: Thinking Machine: Reorganise Regions and  
Cities.

Source: University of Strathclyde Archives.





Miner Woodman Hunter Stephen Turner Gardner Fisher

Figure 26:



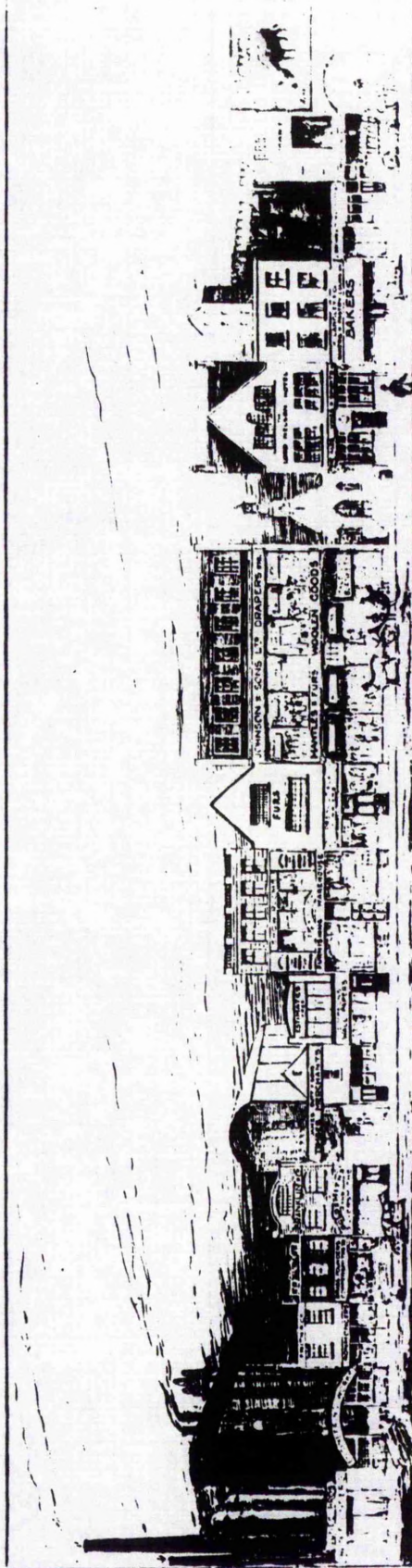


Figure 27:





Figure 28:

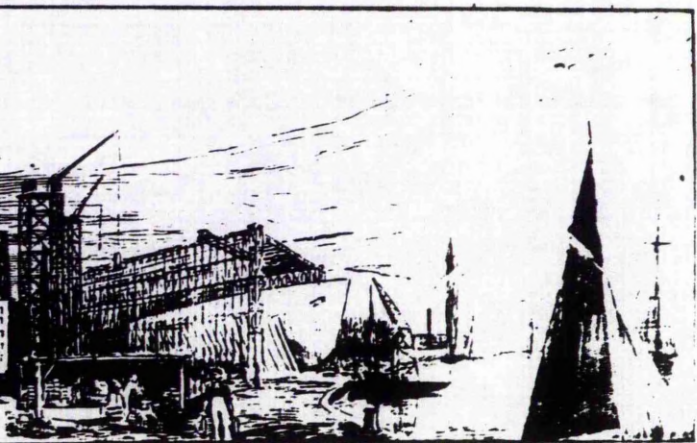
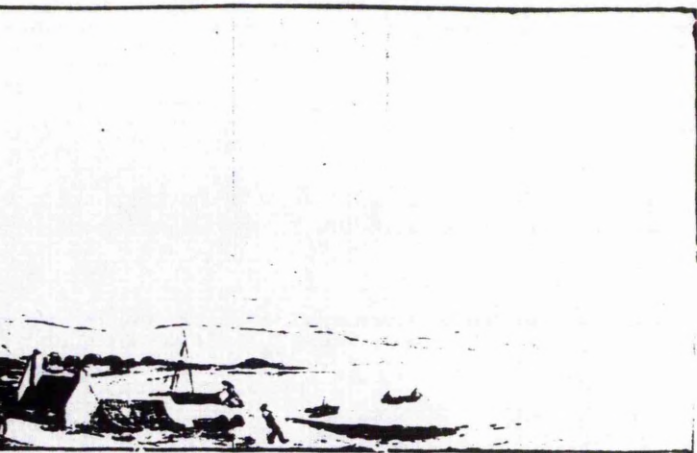
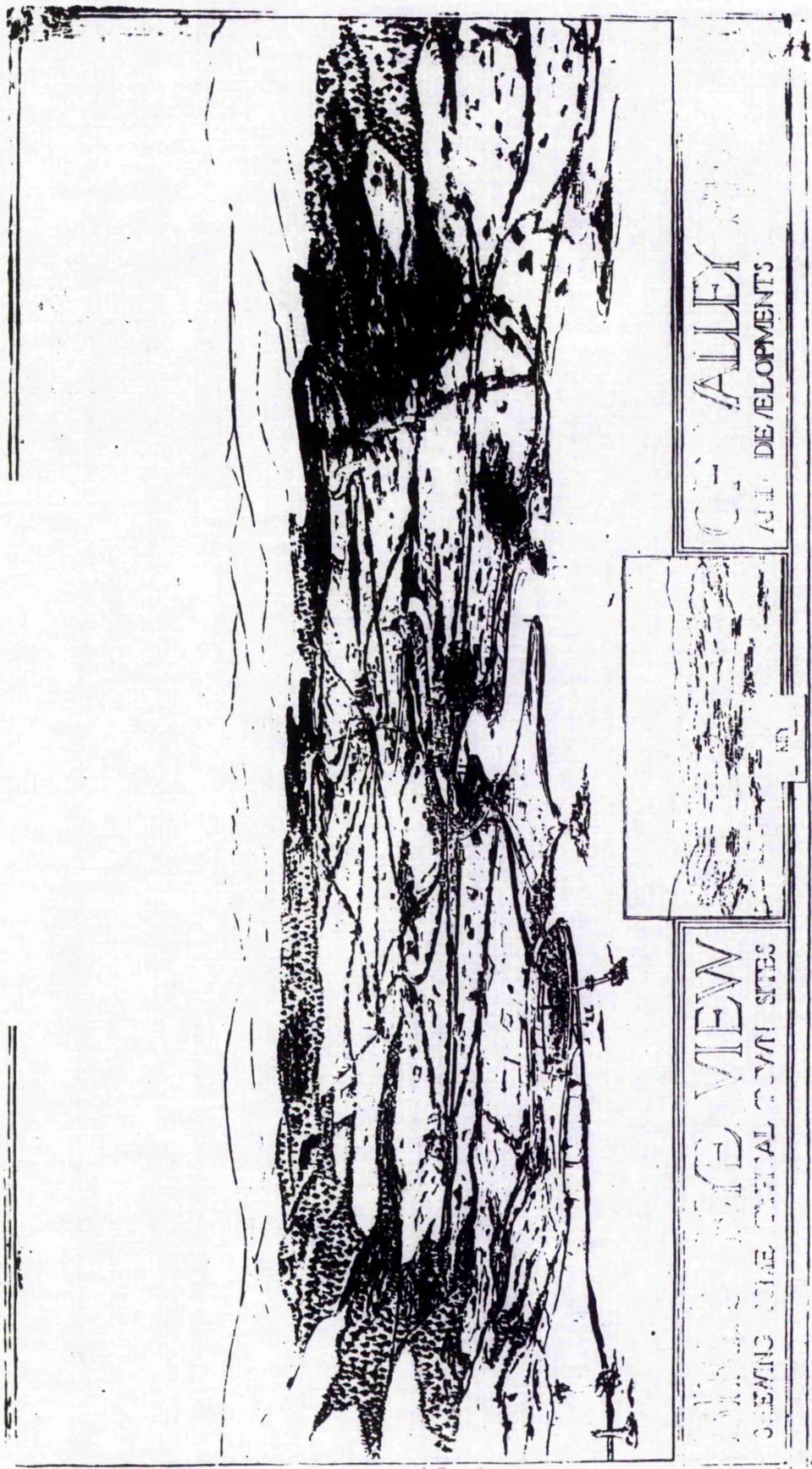




Figure 29:



Figure 30:





MINER WOODMAN  
(BUILDER)

HUNTER  
(SOLDIER)

(RELIGIOUS  
SHEPHERD

WEAVER

CARAVANEER

POOR  
PEASANT  
(BANKER)

PEASANT  
(LAWYER &  
POLITICIAN)

FISHER  
(MERCHANT & NAVY)

Figure 31:



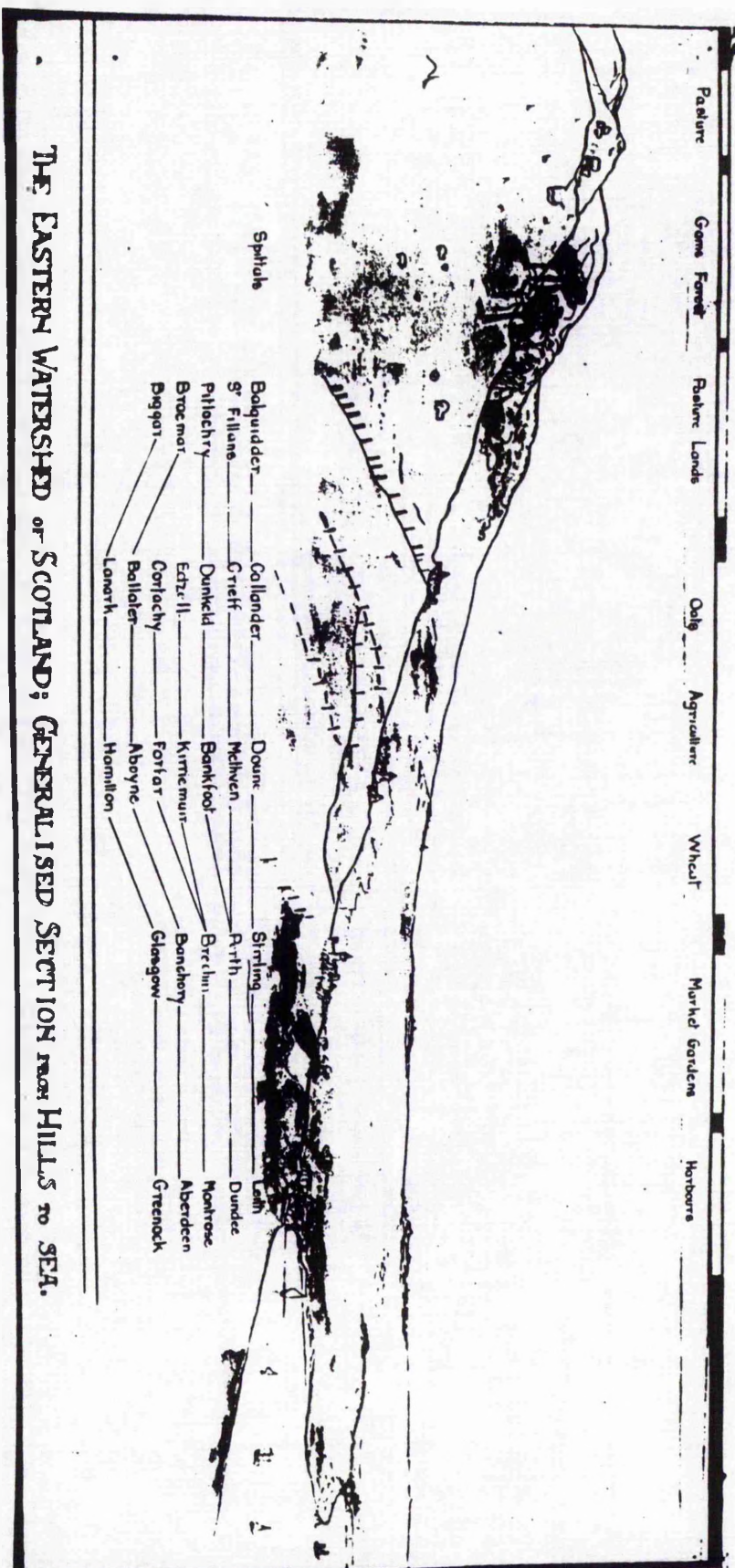


Figure 32:

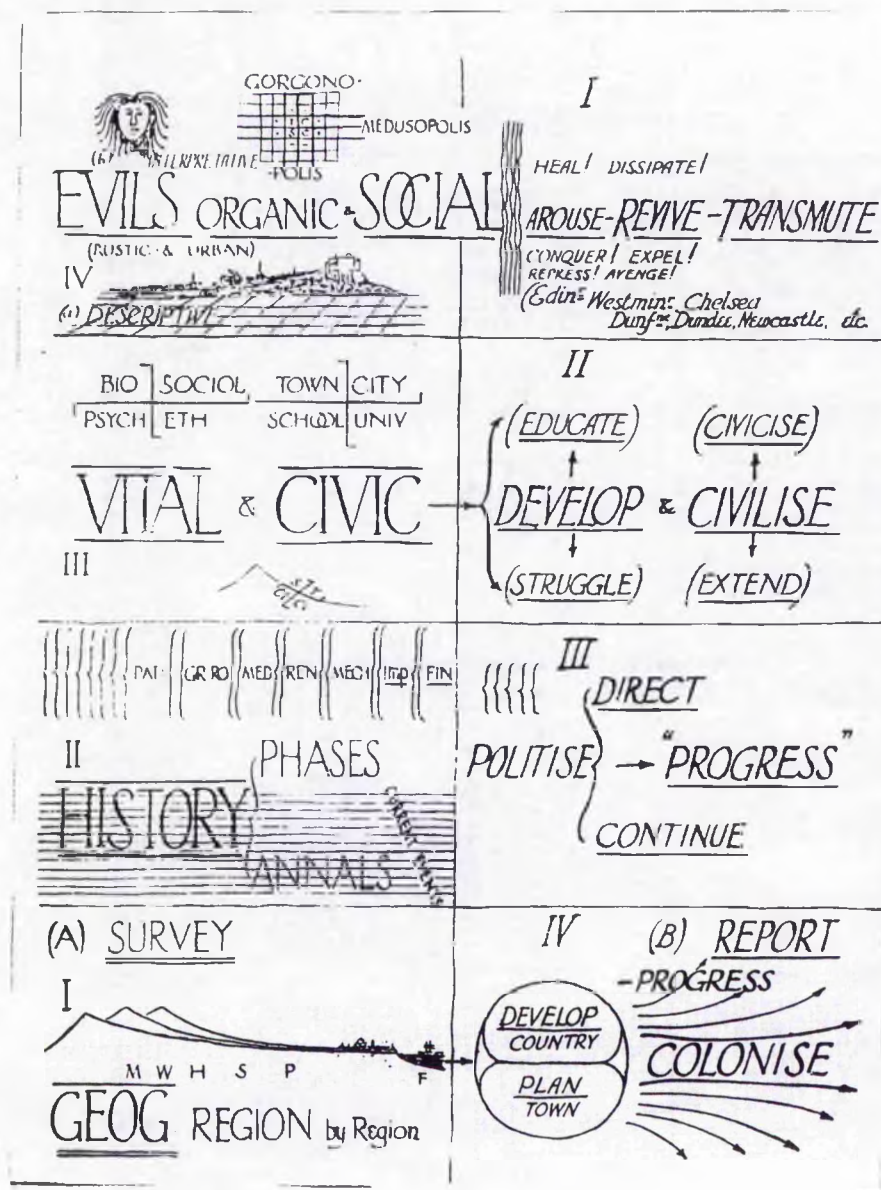


FIGURE 33

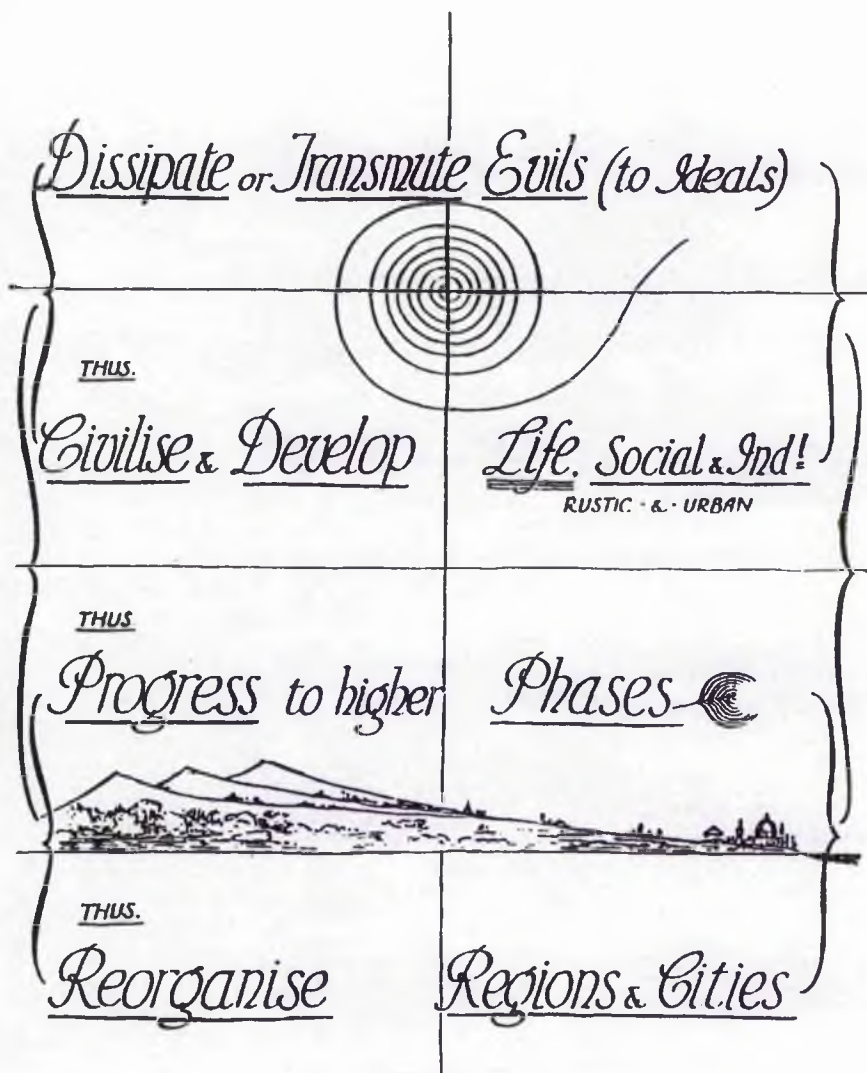
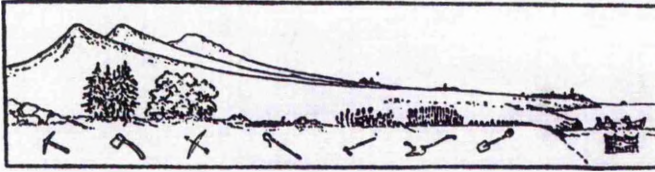


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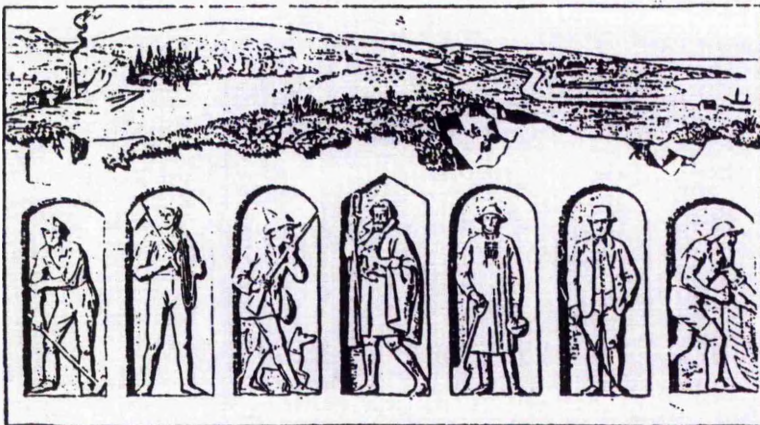




VALLEY SECTION, WITH TYPICAL VEGETATION AND CHARACTERISTIC REGIONAL OCCUPATIONS (16).



SECTION ACROSS WALES AND THE ENGLISH PLAIN (15).



THE NATURE OCCUPATIONS (17).

also contained the possibility of the future utopia. The Valley Section represented 'a stretch of landscape from sea to hill-top, passing up through wheatlands and oatlands, through pasture and forest, and descending on the other side with a ruder slope'. It could be from 'the blue waters of the Forth to the bare Pentland hill-tops' as seen from the Outlook Tower or 'the great plain of Europe rising slowly to the mountains'. (38)

The Valley Section in P.G.'s conceptualisation was the basic unit in which human settlement developed. It was the environment with which the organism interacted. It was a concept derived as a product of Geddes' biological thinking, and was the source of much of the originality in his work on the regional city and survey. Contemporary analysts of the city such as architects would deal with perspectives and contiguities; local government theorists with the boundaries of the built-up settlement. Geddes through the Valley Section saw the modern settlement in a far wider and functional context than that of his contemporaries. It allowed him genuine insights into the growth of the modern city and conurbation (the latter neologism he coined). As a Comtist acquaintance, Dr. J.H. Bridges put it succinctly, Geddes' concept was:

'of a river system which he takes for his unit of study; the high mountain tracts, the pastoral hill-sides, the hamlets and villages in the valleys, the market town where the valleys meet, the convergence of larger valleys into a county town, finally the great city where the river meets the sea'.

If the Valley Section was the environment side of the post-Darwinian equation the organism side, the social structure, was the occupational type. In Geddes words:

'Where we find hill-tops, bare or wooded, we find hunters or woodmen, and as these will want iron for their spearheads or axes, we sooner or later find miners. In the same way, where there are pastures we find sheep and cattle, shepherds and drovers, and where we find richer lands where corn can grow, we find peasants and millers, white by the sea, we find fishers and sailors'. (39)

The upper slopes produce hunters and the forests woodmen and lower down miners - this descant of miner, woodman, hunter, shepherd, peasant, and fisher is repeated ad nauseam throughout Geddes' work and correspondence and lectures. In a one-way line of

causation, an amalgam of Darwin, Spencer and Le Play, the environment is producing certain social types. The social type in its return interacts with the environment in the process of evolution:

'Hunters and woodmen, miners and shepherds, peasants and fishers extend and develop, mingle and strive, fight and combine, so that from these half-dozen primitive types the extraordinary complex of our modern world evolves'. (41)

Survivals in social structure and culture, and how they evolve in history were the basic raw material of the Geddesian student of the humanities.

Here lies the great cul-de-sac, the great structural fault-line of the Geddesian conceptual system, for Geddes' sociology had no concept of class. Although he frequently refers to Booth and Rowntree in the development of his notion of survey the Geddesian version consisted of a geographical survey and a survey of historical evolution. Where the two crossed, the horizontal and the vertical we might say, was reality, now. Geddes' own surveys, such as the Survey of Edinburgh, are an unfolding of evolution historically conceived. They are disappointingly anaemic. The surveys of interest, of boldness and

resource, such as the Dunfermline study for Carnegie and the Report to the Durbar of Indore, ignore his Valley Section - occupational types equation completely. Their value stems directly from Geddes' practical experience, principally in Edinburgh's Old Town.

In explaining the social basis of the modern city Geddes' sociology is still-born. The 'half-dozen primitive types', as the accompanying illustrations show, evolve into the 'complex modern world' of the city with the stunning banality and embarrassing naivete of iron founders and emerging factories from iron miners; furniture shops from timber forests; bakers from corn lands; Rovril advertisements from pastures and shipbuilders from fishing villages.

The most astounding example of the inadequacy of Geddes' sociology is indicated by the total absence of any comment or thought in his work on the problem of the Highlands and the Clearances. There is no reference to him ever visiting the Highlands except for the visit to the funeral of an old family friend near Inverness. He made no tour to the West coast or the Hebrides. In 1836, the very year he moved to the Old Town to engage in the most intensive period of

social action, was the year of the watershed Crofter's Act. Following on the Crofter's War and the Napier Commission of 1884 these were matters of great political moment. Yet of all places the movement of highland peasants to the city of Glasgow was surely the most obvious example of the surface relevance of Geddes' occupational types as explanatory concepts within the framework of the Valley Section. Of the two great problems of modern Scotland, the Clydeside conurbation and the Highlands Geddes leaves us unenlightened. This is even more strange considering that the Smith brothers, two of his students, pioneered ecological studies of the Highlands, and that Frank Fraser Darling's West Highland Survey of the 1940's was the most convincing and successful application of Geddes' notion of Survey. It is, finally, most remarkable that Geddes has no reference to the vast eighteenth century wave of planned village construction in Scotland, given that his great friend Kropotkin had carried forward his notion of Co-operation, from his attack on Social Darwinians in Mutual Aid, a work often cited by Geddes, into his great classic of village planning in Factories, Fields and Workshops.

The absence of a concept of social class in Geddes' sociology reveals also the apolitical, even depoliticised nature of his theorising. Just as Geddes turned from social reform on the Toynbee Hall model when he moved into the Old Town of Edinburgh to cultural reconstruction of the Scottish capital and nation so the politics of the Union did not interest him. Even the incipient politics of the nationalist movement he considered artificial as he wrote to J.A.C. Campbell of Barbreck in 1895, declining membership of the home rule association. He felt cultural reconstruction of Scotland had to come first:

'I am sorry to decline your invitation but I believe I can do best service to the cause by working at the realities of the Scots Renaissance. I believe all the peers and members can do nothing real or permanent until the literary, the academic, the social, the industry movement of Renaissance floats them on.

It is just in the interests of furthering Scottish literature and other realities that I feel bound to stay away. As an illustration of my total dissent from contemporary political methods I may say for instance that I similarly won't go to temperance



meetings not because I don't want much greater temperance, but because I find in practice that the political teetotlers won't come to a real temperance cafe when I build one and I must wait until I see members of the home rule association furthering Scottish literature, work for the Scottish Universities, Scottish Art, Scottish industries of a very greater extent before I could join them'. (42)

In his lecture to rally support for the Outlook Tower in 1905 the Reverend John Kelman set out his view in The Interpreter's House that what Geddes was doing at the Tower was producing 'trained seers'. Although he made play on the familiar Geddes' notion of eye-education and the importance of the visual it also, as befitted a minister of the Kirk, carried with it the biblical notion of the pursuit of ideals. The survey of the historical evolution of a city for Geddes was to make an inventory of evils and ideals, the better to retard one and advance the other in times present and future. Unity in politics and separation in social ethics was George Elder Davie's summary of the cultural dichotomy of Scotland after the Act of Union. The ethical initiative passed, in this view, from the Kirk after the Disruption to the University. Geddes sought to renew the tradition in the Scottish City.

## Footnotes

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29. Cockburn: 'A Letter to the Lord Provost', P. 80.
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36. ibid. P. 145-6.
37. A First Visit to the Outlook Tower, 1906, Geddes and Colleagues, P. 21.
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## Bibliographical Essay

Lewis Mumford was the most effective prosecutor of Patrick Geddes' reputation as a town planner. As an American writer and a cautious disciple of Geddes (see 'The Disciple's rebellion' in Encounter, September 1966) Mumford was principally concerned to be of instruction to his fellow Americans but it was in Britain in the 1940's and after, that he had the greatest influence. His most seminal publication for the town planning movement was The Culture of Cities, written, as he says in the first edition in 1938, 'under the stimulus of Patrick Geddes', and which, he wrote in the new preface to the 1970 edition, 'in some countries, notably Britain ... served as a guide book to reconstruction and renewal', (1) consequent on the upheaval of the Second World War. Mumford's influence was all the greater at this time since it was experienced when the foundations of British town planning were being established and when the demand for post-war rebuilding created an unprecedented demand for the application of town planning controls and guidance.

The Culture of Cities was one volume of a trilogy conceived in the 1930's, along with Technics and Civilization (New York, 1934) and The Conditions of Man which was not published until 1944. P.G.'s pedigree is obvious in the

very titles of the trilogy which Mumford readily acknowledged - 'my chief intellectual debt is to my master, Patrick Geddes', he wrote - but it was the development of the Scots thinker's thought rather than its systematic exposition that was Mumford's main concern. His interest, he averred was not 'to take over Geddes' contributions in block':

'Not mimicry and automatic acceptance, but a vital assimilation, was what Geddes sought; for to him thinking was a function of living not a sequestered sort of play. While I have sometimes utilized Geddes's bold summaries and short cuts, I have never felt bound to respect the mere letter of his teaching, nor to give its details the same emphasis that they had in his own schemata. (2)

Mumford's last two autobiographical books, Findings and Keepings: Analects for an Autobiography (London, 1975) and My Works and Days: A Personal Chronicle (New York and London 1979) confirm the importance of Geddes' influence and add to the details of the relationship.

Mumford's town planning writings, therefore, were not a guide to Geddes' work: they constituted a personal interpretation, a synthesis of the Garden City idea of Ebenezer Howard combined with the regionalist idea of Geddes. The particular American ideological form of town

planning that Mumford developed found expression in the Regional Planning Association of America that he founded in 1923 together with Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, Benton McKaye, F.L. Ackerman and Stuart Chase. Roy Lubove's Community Planning in the 1920's: The Contribution of the Regional Planning Association of America (Pittsburgh, 1963) is the essential academic study of the RPAA while Carl Sussman's Planning the Fourth Migration: The Neglected Vision of the Regional Planning Association of America (MIT Press Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1976) gathers together a scattered group of writing by the principal protagonists that would be otherwise difficult to unearth. Both books contain piquant illustration of the difficulty of deriving the true word of town planning technique from the Geddesian canon in the clash between Mumford and the RPAA with Thomas Adams's Regional Plan of New York. Adams was the other great pioneer of town planning from Edinburgh (see Michael Simpson: Thomas Adams and the Modern Town Planning Movement, London, 1985), as he reminded Mumford:

'I knew Geddes, probably before Mr. Mumford was born, and have never ceased to derive guidance and inspiration from his writings ... My view is that Geddes would have given enthusiastic approval to the proposals in the New York Plan ...

Mr. Mumford does not write as a man who has found the facts and difficulties of making a thorough survey of urban conditions and tendencies, or of planning a city or region in a democratic country, rather as an esthete-sociologist, who has a religion that is based on high ideals, but is unworkable'. (3)

The first meeting of the RPAA in May 1923 had Geddes in attendance and the last meeting at a conference on regionalism at the University of Virginia in 1933 saw Franklin D. Roosevelt initiate a process that was to result in the Tennessee Valley Authority. This was to return to Scotland in the form of Secretary of State - Tom Johnston's North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board in the 1940's.

The immediate practical work of the RPAA however was not in propounding regionalism but in the attempts to establish garden cities in America. Clarence Stein's Towards New Towns for America (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1966) is the essential history of this experience, and which contains an invaluable history of the RPAA in an introduction by Mumford.

With the Garden City, transformed into the New Town, in the ascendant in the late 1940's the Geddesian half of the Mumford-RPAA conceptual scheme was disconnected and eventually left behind. This influence can be traced in Mumford's correspondence with F.J. Osborn, the greatest



propagandist of the New Towns in Britain, in A TransAtlantic Dialogue, 1938-70: The Letters of Lewis Mumford and Frederic J. Osborn, edited by Michael Hughes (New York 1972). When Mumford came to rewrite The Culture of Cities (1938) as The City in History (London, 1961) it was the growth of the motor-car-based suburbs that he thought were the greatest threat to the modern city. Against suburbia he counterposed the New Town, and of the Geddesian notion of regionalism in the earlier volume there was scarcely a trace in the later work.

When academics, rather than participants and partisans, came to cast the cool eye of their profession over the history of town planning in the late 1960's, Geddes was measured against the official ideology that had emerged in the 1940's and he was found wanting. The most profound caesura in the historiography of British town planning is Professor Anthony Sutcliffe's essay 'British Town Planning and the Historian' in his introduction to the essays he edited in British Town Planning: the Formative Years (Leicester, 1981). Of those pioneers whose opportunity it was to fashion an 'all-embracing theory of environmental planning as a means of social reform' Sutcliffe concludes that the immediate concerns of the likes of Raymond Unwin and Thomas Adams 'left the task entirely to Patrick Geddes, who took it up with gusto and made a complete hash of it'. (4)

It was hard not to conclude here that Sutcliffe's judgement perpetuates a severe reductionism on Geddes' work; that is, that the 1947 ideology of British town planning is the yardstick against which Geddes was to be tested and failed. The whole tenor of studies of the last twenty years of scientific disciplines and professional identities is set against what one historian has called 'the linear evolution of ideas':

'These assumptions involve the belief in a continuous development of science by accumulation of facts, discoveries, and knowledge in science. The task, then, is to trace the progressive victory of truth over error, of 'good' ideas over 'bad', and of the inevitable emergence of time ideas from facts. The historian of science is thus concerned with whom to worship. Error is viewed as something wicked which hinders the development of science; consequently, little interest is paid to historical contexts or intellectual climates since the focus is placed on the internal evolutions of each science'. (5)

The alternative to such an internalistic and positivistic approach to the emergence of a scientific discipline or a system of ideas, the same author continues, may be termed the contextual approach. The context of the contribution of Patrick Geddes to ideas of the emerging profession of town planning is that of a Scottish intellectual engaged

with the complex fate of the Scottish nation within the late Victorian British State.

One of the tests the above theorist applies in the context of knowledge outside the professional community of an academic discipline is in the role of the circles of affinity outside the core group. If we apply this test to Geddes' work in Edinburgh, we begin to trace a different pedigree of town planning than that legitimised by the retrospective consensus of 1940's town planning ideology.

The first and immediate circle of affinity is that of the emergent school of geography in Scotland. H.R. Mill who became Librarian of the Royal Geographical Society in London and subsequently Director of the British Rainfall Organisation describes in his autobiography how Geddes played a catalytic role in developing geography as an academic discipline in Edinburgh:

'Geddes was the most inspiring influence in Edinburgh in the early eighties, when inspiration blew from many quarters ... He attracted a swarm of disciples, not all of whom were able to profit from his scientific zeal without being dazzled by his amazing versatility in the kaleidoscopic plans he was continually launching, leaving the navigation to his followers'. (6)

The roll call of geographers influenced by Geddes and who were pioneers and leaders in their profession is impressive. Other than Mill there were A.J. Herbertson and H.N. Dickson who went on to lecture in the first geography department in the land at Oxford. Herbertson soon became head of the department at Oxford and Dickson went on to take the chair at Reading. Other geographers in the Geddes circle included Marion Newbiggin, fellow worker in the Outlook Tower and life-long editor of the Scottish Geographical Magazine; Robert Neal Rudmose Brown, subsequently Professor of Geography at Sheffield and Marcel Hardy who pioneered studies of geography and ecology in the Highlands. Elspeth N. Lochhead's 'Scotland as the Cradle of Modern Academic Geography in Britain' and 'The Royal Scottish Geographical Society: the setting and sources of its success' both in Scottish Geographical Magazine, September 1981 and September 1984 respectively, are the essential reading for Geddes' role in nurturing geography in Scotland. On Herbertson E.W. Gilbert's article in Geography, Vol. 50, 1965, 'A.J. Herbertson: An Appreciation of His Life and Work' is a comprehensive treatment of the subject and Hugh Robert Mills' An Autobiography, (London, 1951) is useful background. R.N. Rudmose Brown's 'Scotland and Some Trends in Geography' is an early essay on the same theme in Geography, Volume XXXiii, 1948. Of Geddes' continuing influence in geography among the likes of C.B. Fawcett, H.J. Fleure, Elisee Reclus and P. Kropotkin, Robert E. Dickinson's Regional Concept: The Anglo-American Leaders

(London, 1976) is the basic reference and more recent material is covered by W. Iain Stevenson's essay on Geddes in Geographers, Bibliographical Studies Volume 2, (London, 1978) edited by T.W. Freeman and Philippe Pinchinel.

The question could be asked: why did Geddes not go on to be a major founder of British academic geography and remain a geographer pure and simple? The answer has surely to be that he wanted to be engag  , he wanted to be part of the action of the intellectual and cultural struggles of the Scotland of his day. This brings us to the second circle of affinity of Geddes' work in Edinburgh: the artists and intellectuals of a nascent Scotland. The origin of Geddes' town planning ideas lay in his practical experience of the urban renewal of Old Edinburgh. He saw this early town planning and the social and cultural regeneration of Edinburgh as a continuum. The selectivity of posterity among the ideologues of the town planning has repressed this cultural activity of Geddes as marginal. It has been seen as an immature excrescence and an irrelevance to what was to be the unfolding of Geddes' true mission as a progenitor of the town planning profession. Yet the recovery of what has been repressed, as in the experience of psychoanalysis, would direct the attention to a more compelling reality: the essential Scottishness of the genesis of Geddes' work.

The essential Scottish context has not been recovered by Geddes' biographers. Philip Boardman, an American, who studied under Geddes in France and has lived most of his life in Norway, is the standard biographer, a task which has been his life's work. His The Worlds of Patrick Geddes: Biologist, Town Planner, Re-educator, Peace-Warrior, (London, 1978) is, with the benefit of a great deal of new material, a rewritten version of his Patrick Geddes, Maker of the Future, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1944), the first biography of Geddes. Boardman's work is that of an enthusiast and a disciple and although it gives the most detailed description of Geddes as the evolution of a personality to date it does not probe or explain the Scottish content of Geddes' work. Philip Mariet's Pioneer of Sociology, (London, 1957) was a quasi-official biography written at the instigation of Geddes' son, Arthur, and with his assistance, but is now eclipsed by the fuller Worlds of Patrick Geddes of Boardman. Paddy Kitchen's A Most Unsettling Person (London, 1975) is a well-written popular biography along the conventional lines. It adds little that is new. Amelia Defries': The Interpreter Geddes: The Man and his Gospel, (London, 1927) and Edward McGegan's Patrick Geddes as a Man of Action (typescript in the National Library of Scotland) are anecdotal and are not systematic but contain many fresh insights to Geddes and his work.

Neither has the Scottish content of Geddes' work been recovered by the professional historians. The interpretations of T.C. Smout in A Century of the Scottish People, (London, 1986), Christopher Harvie in No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland 1914-1980, (London, 1981) and Sydney and Olive Checkland in Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832-1914, (London, 1984) are largely derived from the work of Boardman. Helen E. Meller concentrates on Geddes' international role in 'Cities in Evolution: Patrick Geddes as an international prophet of town planning before 1914' in A. Sutcliffe (ed), The Rise of Modern Urban Planning, (London, 1980) and in 'Patrick Geddes 1854-1932' in G. Cherry (ed) Pioneers of British Town Planning, (London, 1981). Her article in Victorian Studies (March 1973) 'Patrick Geddes: An Analysis of His Theory of Civics, 1880-1904' is an early essay on the development of his thought.

### **Scottish Context**

Of all Dr. Johnson's flights of prejudice against Scotland, that of the Scotsman's noblest prospect being the highway to England has probably the greatest notoriety. Beneath the comical patina it has acquired, the statement contains a painful truth. Emigration had been the great loss, the great lament at the heart of Scottish culture. The haemorrhage of Scottish talent and its absorption by the London metropolis was the structural reality of the



depletion of Scottish cultural life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was a distinguished and dolorous roll call with the loss of luminaries of the likes of Mill, Macaulay, Ruskin and Carlyle.

With Geddes we begin to see manifest an early representation of a desire to stem this loss, to reverse this flow. He is representative of a change in Scottish sensibility discernible at the end of the nineteenth century, a new sense of objectivity about his national destiny. Travel, to which he devotes a whole chapter in Cities in Evolution, (London, 1915), is no longer a necessary escape, but a necessity for good citizenship. He is not disabled by maladie du pays, that crippling nostalgia of the emigre, one feels, when he has porridge on the daily menu at the Scots College in Montpellier, or proudly sports his Scots bonnet in the Quartier Latin, or is thrilled to pass the aged Carlyle on his evening stroll in Chelsea. He is instance of a new confidence, a new determination, a new objectivity about Scottish national identity. 'We are divided between two exaggerations', he was to say in his inaugural lecture at Dundee, 'one, that of a legendary superiority in almost every conceivable respect to almost all conceivable people; the other of excessive self-depreciation, as if we had no nationality worth the name'. (7)

That self consciousness about national identity and national recovery, which does not pander to the repressed side of the national psyche's romantic and sentimental indulgence in tartanry and kailyardism, is manifestation of a newer and intenser realism in Geddes' time about what we have come to recognise as the Scottish dimension or the national movement, according to political taste. When Geddes moved into the Old Town of Edinburgh he abandoned his interest in social reform in favour of Scottish cultural regeneration. We should seek to interpret and understand this essential Geddes within the literature of national assertion, both culturally and politically. H.J. Hanham: Scottish Nationalism, (London, 1969), C. Harvey: Scotland and Nationalism, (London, 1977), and No Gods and Precious Few Heroes, (London, 1981) are basic references. David Craig's Scottish Literature and The Scottish People, (London, 1961) is particularly good on the effects of emigration. John Stuart Blackie's The Union of 1707 and its Results: A Plea for Scottish Home Rule (Glasgow, 1892) gives the appropriate content from the first chairman of the Scottish Home Rule Association. A.M. Stoddart's John Stuart Blackie: A Biography 2 Vols, (Edinburgh, 1895) is the only biography of Blackie. His importance for Geddes is expressed in 'The Scots Renaissance' in the Evergreen (Spring) (Edinburgh, 1895).

Geddes is an important progenitor of that movement that is today known as devolution. C.B. Fawcett's Provinces of England: A Study of Some Geographical Aspects of Devolution, (London, 1919), which was commissioned by Geddes as part of his Making of the Future series, is the essential starting point of an important strand in British geography. The first edition of Provinces contains Geddes' essential introduction which is omitted in subsequent editions. Robert E. Dickinson's City, Region and Regionalism: A Geographical Contribution to Human Ecology, (London, 1947) is an important work within the continuation of the devolution tradition in academic geography and his Regional Concept (above) is the essential history of that tradition. The political aspects of the tradition of devolution, which are still very much alive today, are best covered by Vernon Bogdanor's Devolution, (Oxford, 1979). The depth and constancy of this tradition go right back to the debates on the Act of Union in 1703. See David Daiches' Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun: Selected Political Writings and Speeches, (Edinburgh, 1979).

The central aspect of the Scottish context of Geddes' work is his concern with Edinburgh as a capital. For his urban renewal and conservation work in the Old Town there has been good recent published material, although there is no substitute for detailed exploration on foot of the old wynds and closes backed up with examination of the petitions to the Dean of Guilds with appropriate plans and drawings in

the City Archives. The Buildings of Scotland - Edinburgh volume by John Gifford, Colin McWilliam and David Walker (London, 1984) is a major landmark in Scottish cultural history, and is very helpful on Geddes' work in the Old Town, as well as that of his disciples among two subsequent generations: Frank Mears and Robert Hurd. Details of the renewed buildings are given in M. Cuthbert: Catalogue of 1982 Geddes Exhibition in the Edinburgh International Festival Exhibition at Edinburgh College of Art. Peter J. Smith's: 'Planning as Environmental Improvement: Slum Clearance in Victorian Edinburgh' in A. Sutcliffe (ed), The Rise of Modern Urban Planning 1800-1914 (London, 1980), has useful background material on Geddes' work on improvement schemes.

If there is no adequate study of late nineteenth century Edinburgh there is even less on the cultural life of the same period. Elizabeth S. Cummings' Arts and Crafts in Edinburgh 1880-1930, the catalogue of the Edinburgh-Dublin Exhibition at the College of Art in the International Festival of 1985 is an essential beacon of light in all the scholarly darkness; and Helen Smailes: A Portrait Gallery for Scotland: The Foundation, Architecture and Mural Decoration of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery 1882-1906, (Edinburgh, 1985) is excellent on the cultural realities and aspirations of the Edinburgh of P.G.'s period. Ian Finlay's Art and Scotland (Oxford, 1948) is a general text but is insightful on Geddes. There are no studies to

date on the important architects Rowand Anderson or Sydney Mitchell. Hugh MacDiarmid has a lot of arresting comments on the culture of Geddes' times but it is scattered in an abundance of sources. The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid edited by Alan Bold (London, 1984) is a huge quarry full of rich material as is his Contemporary Scottish Studies, (London, 1926). The Company I Have Kept, (London, 1966), has an interesting essay by MacDiarmid on Geddes.

There is plentiful material on Edinburgh as a capital and a focus of the cultural life of Scotland. A.J. Youngson's The Making of Classical Edinburgh, (Edinburgh, 1966) is the major work on the building of the New Town; and Henry Cockburn's Life of Lord Jeffrey, (Edinburgh, 1852) is a rich source of comment on the draining away of Edinburgh's cultural life by the burgeoning London market, as are also his Journal 1831-1854, (Edinburgh, 1874) and his Memorials of his Time, (Edinburgh, 1856). Robert Louis Stevenson's Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes, (London, 1879) is the most insightful essay on Victorian Edinburgh by that great writer: George Gordon's 'Edinburgh: Capital and Regional City' in G. Gordon (ed), Regional Cities in the U.K. 1890-1980, (London, 1986) is an up-to-date academic summary and Andrew Dewar Gibb's Chapter 'A Country Changes Capitals' in his Scotland Resurgent, (Stirling, 1950) is a first class essay by a Scottish Nationalist on the same theme. Lest the traditional complaint be raised that the influence of Edinburgh is exaggerated at the expense of Glasgow, Bernard

Aspinwall's scholarly Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States 1820-1920, (Aberdeen, 1984) easily corrects the balance.

The reform and development of education was at the heart of Geddes' strivings for a Scottish cultural renaissance, and the role of the Scottish University was his greatest passion. Although it has been criticised, I continue to find George Elder Davie's: The Democratic Intellect, Scotland and her Universities in the 19th Century, (Edinburgh, 1961), the most valuable academic study on the genesis of Patrick Geddes' ideas and activities. Davie has recently published a sequel to his great work: The Crisis of the Democratic Intellect: The Problem of Generalism and Specialisation in Twentieth Century Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1986) which continues his theme into the present century. His debate with his principal critic, R.D. Anderson: Education and Democracy in Victorian Scotland, (Oxford, 1983) is in Cencrastus Spring 1984, and his critics reply in Cencrastus Spring 1987.

### **Geddes' Writings**

For a person who proclaims the synthesis of knowledge as his highest ideal Geddes shows little unity in any of his written work. His two-volumed Life: Outline of General Biology, (London, 1931) written with J. Arthur Thomson,

was a unified statement of his biological work but there was never an equivalent of his cultural and town planning endeavours.

There is even less published material by him on his ideas about Scotland and his aspirations for the culture of his native land. In fact his greatest legacy is his urban renewal and conservation in Old Edinburgh. This work is still there and plain to see, and his greatest and most substantial achievement of the Old Town is the Ramsay Gardens, which remains finely preserved and unaltered. A major record exists of the art and design work for which he was patron and stimulator, which, if not in situ as in the case of the marvellous murals and painted ceilings, is readily available in a number of Scottish public galleries.

Other than his urban renewal and art work, the principal source of Geddes' Scottish work, is in letters, ephemeral printed material and general archival records. There is very little of his town planning exhibition material still in existence. Of his published material the pride of place of his Scottish work is The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal, Spring and Autumn 1895, Summer and Winter 1896 (Edinburgh), and although City Development: A Study of Parks, Gardens and Culture Institutes, (Edinburgh, 1904) is about Dunfermline it is really a distillation of his Old Edinburgh experience. The most accessible book of Geddes is his Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning



Movement and to the Study of Civics, (London, 1915) which has been reprinted a number of times. Although this draws on his Scottish experience in Edinburgh and Dunfermline it's full value is attenuated without his town planning exhibition as illustration and expansion of his arguments. This applies to many of his writings on town planning which tend to be repetetive and lack profundity. The living exhibition with Geddes amidst expounding his message was a necessary adjunct to Geddes' writings, as many contemporaries have testified. This is of course as Geddes would have wished it because he was very much the A.S. Neil of professors. The heart of his message would have been most immediately accessible if the Outlook Tower had continued to function as a living civics laboratory rather than a tourist peep-show.

To recover the message of Patrick Geddes is the job of academic interpreters, since Geddes' numerous published works do not cohere. His letter writing and his conversation (where reported) is lively, engaging and intelligent: his formal writing is difficult of access and amorphous. Not in his published writings shall we seek Geddes; if we require monuments we shall have to look about us. And we shall find that the father of the international prophet is, in Hugh MacDiarmid's words, a prophet of Scotland unsung in his homeland.

## Footnotes

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Important archival collections of Geddes papers, graphics and printed material are in the following:

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University of Keele.

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University of St. Andrews (D'Arcy Thomson Papers).

Edinburgh City Archive (including the former Dean of Guilds building plans and petitions).

Central Library, Edinburgh.

### **Geddes Published Material**

Philip Boardman has the most complete bibliographies of Geddes publications in The Worlds of Patrick Geddes, (London, 1978) and in his doctoral thesis at the University of Montpellier: Esquisse de L'Oeuvre educatrice de Patrick Geddes (Montpellier, 1936). A copy of the latter is in the National Library of Scotland. The following bibliographical list gives only those publications of Geddes relevant to the arguments of this thesis.

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